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COLLECTION

LETTERS

Interlocking and Interwoven

Several Decades

By WILLIAM L. L.

Edited by E. R.

Published by

A
COLLECTION
OF
LETTERS

On the Most
Interesting and Important SUBJECTS,
AND ON
Several Occasions.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

LONDON:

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TO THE
READER.

THE Letters in this Collection having been experimentally found of great private Benefit, the consent of the Author has been obtained to their being made Publick. And as they contain a rich Treasure of divine Truths, and come home to the Bosoms of Men, comprehending the Fulness of Religion, and resolving a great Variety of important Points, the Editors have great Pleasure, in being allowed to Publish them.

T. L. G. W.

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TO THE

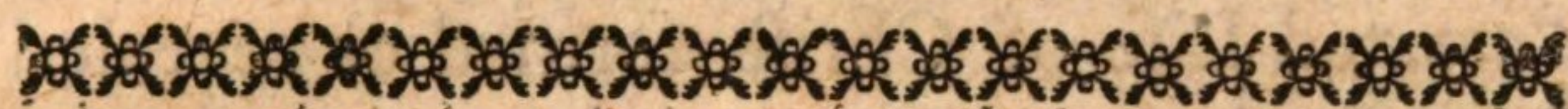
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T. A. C. W.



A
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OF
LETTERS.



LETTER I.

To Mr. J. L.

My dear and most worthy Friend,

 OR so I must salute you, as having long dwelt in my Heart under that Idea, though personally unknown to me. I shall not trouble you with apologizing for this long Silence, but speak directly to the Matters of yours, concerning your Difficulty to join in any *Church Communion*.

B

Religion

Religion, or Church Communion is in its true Nature, both *external* and *internal*, which are thus united, and thus distinguished; the one is the *outward Sign*, the other is the *inward Truth* signified by it: The one never was, nor ever can be, in its true State, without the other.

The *inward Truth*, or Church, is *Regeneration*, or the Life, Spirit, and Power of Christ, quickened and brought to life, in the Soul.

The *outward Sign*, or Church, is that outward *Form*, or manner of Life, that bears full witness to the Truth of this regenerated Life of Christ, formed or revealed in the Soul.

The *inward Truth* gives forth its outward proper Manifestations of itself, and these Manifestations bring forth the true *outward Church*, and make it to be *visible*, and *outwardly* known.

As thus, every thing in the inward Life, and Spirit, and Will of Christ, when it becomes living, dwelling and working in the Spirit of our Minds, or inward Man, is the *inward Church*, or Kingdom of God, set up within us: And every thing in the *outward Behaviour*, and visible Conversation of Christ, whilst dwelling amongst Men, when practised and followed by us,
in

in the Form and Manner of our Life, makes us the Members of that *outward Church*, which he set up in this World.

Inwardly nothing lived in Christ, but the sole Will of God, a perpetual Regard to his Glory, and one continual Desire of the Salvation of all Mankind. When this Spirit is in us, then are we *inwardly* one with Christ, and united to God through Him.

Outwardly Christ exercised every kind of Love, Kindness and Compassion to the Souls and Bodies of Men; nothing was visible in the outward Form of his Life, but Humility and Lowliness of State in every shape; a contented Want, or rather total Disregard of all worldly Riches, Power, Ease or Pleasure; a continual Meekness, Gentleness, Patience and Resignation, not only to the Will of God, but to the haughty Powers of the World, to the Perverseness, and Contradiction of all the Evil and Malice of Men, and all the Hardships and Troubles of human Life: Now this, and such like *outward Behaviour* of Christ, thus separate from, and contrary to the Spirit, Wisdom and Way, of this World, was that *very outward Church*, of which he willed all Mankind to become visible, and living Members.—And whoever in the Spi-

rit of Christ, lives in the *outward Exercise* of these Virtues, lives as to himself in the highest Perfection of *Church Unity*, and is the true inward and outward Christian.—He is all that he can be, he hath all that he can have, he doth all that he can do, and enjoyeth all that he can enjoy, as a Member of Christ's Body, or Church in this World.

For as Christ was God and Man, come down from Heaven, for no other end, but fully to restore the Union that was lost betwixt God and Man, so *Church Unity* is, and can be nothing else, but the Unity of this, or that Man, or number of Men with God, through the *Power* and *Nature* of Christ. And therefore it must be the Truth, and the whole Truth, that nothing more is required, nor will any thing less be able, to make any one a true Member of the *one Church* of Christ, out of which there is no Salvation, and in which there is no Condemnation, but only and solely his Conformity to, and Union with the inward Spirit, and outward Form of Christ's Life and Behaviour in this World.—This is *the one Fold under one Shepherd*; though the Sheep are scattered, or feeding in Vallies, or on Mountains ever so distant, or separate from one another.

On

On the other hand, not only every unreasonable unjust Action, be it done to whom it will, not only every unkind, proud, wrathful, scornful, disdainful inward Thought, or outward Behaviour to any Person, but every *Unreadiness* to do good of all Kinds, to all that we can; every *Unwillingness* to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, and love our Neighbour as ourselves; every *Aversion* to be inwardly all Love, and outwardly all Meekness, Gentleness, Courtisy, and Condescension in Words and Actions towards every Creature, for whom Christ died, makes us *Schismatics*, though we be ever so daily gathered together, into one and the same Place, joining in one and the same Form of Creeds, Prayers and Praises offered to God, and is truly a *leaving*, or *breaking* that Church *Unity*, which makes us one with Christ, as our Head, and unites us with Men, as the Members of his Body.

That the matter is thus; that the true *Church Unity* consists in our walking as Christ walked, fully appears, as from many others, so from these plain Words of our Lord himself: *Ye are not of this World, as I am not of this World, but I have chosen you out of the World.* Therefore to have that Contrariety to the World, which Christ had, is the one

necessary and full Proof of our being his, of our belonging to him, and being one with him.

Again, *Abide in me, and I in you, if ye abide in me, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you. If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch withered, &c. For without me ye can do nothing.*

Therefore the one true Proof of our being living Members of Christ's Church on Earth, or only dead Branches, fit for the Fire, is nothing else but our being, or not being inwardly of that Spirit, and outwardly of that Behaviour, which Christ manifested to the World.

Again, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you, and by this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples.*

Therefore the true and sufficient Mark of our outward Church Membership, is there only, and fully, outwardly known, and found in every Man, where the outward Form of Christ's loving Behaviour to all Men, is outwardly seen and known to be in him. These and the like Passages of Christ and his Apostles (though quite overlooked by most modern Defenders of the one Church) are the only Places that speak home to the Truth, and Reality of Church Unity.

It

It may now be reasonably asked, What is the *divine Service*, or *Worship* in this Church? For every Church must have its divine Service and Worship, which is the Life, Strength, and Support of it.

It is answered: *That no Man can call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* Therefore nothing is, or can be a divine Service in that Church, which has Christ for its Lord, but what has the Holy Spirit for its Beginner, Doer, and Finisher. For if it be certain that no one can own Christ as his Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, then it must be equally certain, that no one can serve or worship God through Christ his Lord, in any other Way, Help, Power or Means, but so far as it is all done, in, and by the Power of the same Holy Spirit. Whatsoever is born of the Flesh is Flesh; that is, whatsoever proceeds from, or is done by the natural Powers of Man, from his Birth of Flesh and Blood, is meerly human, earthly, and corrupt, and can no more do any thing that is heavenly, or perform a Service or worship that is divine, than our present Flesh and Blood can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus saith the Apostle, *Ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he*

is none of his. And consequently if not his, he can perform no divine Service to him. Nor can any Worship cease to be carnal, or become divine, but by its being all that it is, and doing all that it doth, by the Power, and Presence of Christ dwelling in our Souls, and helping us by his Holy Spirit to cry in Truth and Reality, Abba Father.

The New Testament never calls us to do, or offer, or allows any thing to be done or offered to God, as a divine Service, or Worship, but what is done in the Truth, and Reality of Faith, of Hope, of Love, and Obedience to God.

But through all the New Testament, no Faith, no Hope, no Love is allowed to be true, and godly, but only that Faith, that Hope, &c. which *solely* proceeds from, and is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, living, dwelling, and working in our whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit.

This Spirituality of the Christian Religion, is the Reason why it was first preached to the World under the Name of the Kingdom of God, because under this new Dispensation, freed from Veils, Shadows and Figures of good Things absent or to come, God himself is manifested, ruling in us and over us, as an *essential Light* of our Lives,
as

as an *indwelling Word* of Power, as a *life-giving Spirit* within us, forming us by a new Birth, to become a *chosen Generation*, a *royal Priesthood*, to offer *spiritual Sacrifices* to God, through a new and living Way which *Christ* hath consecrated for us. The Truth and Perfection of which State, is plainly set forth by the following Prayer of Christ, viz. *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—I in them and thou in me, that they be made perfect in one, and that the Love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* Now for the Truth and Certainty of this spiritual Kingdom, in which are only spiritual Worshippers baptized from above, into an Union, and Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through the mysterious Union of God and Man in the one Mediator Jesus Christ; for the Truth, I say, of this spiritual State of Christianity, we have the plainest Words of Christ, expressly declaring that the *Jerusalem Service*, and consequently every Thing, or Service that *has the Nature of it*, was to have its End in the Establishment of his Church.

Believe me, saith he, the Hour cometh when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: But the Hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshippers shall

*shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth:
For the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

Therefore it must be certain in the highest degree, that Christ cannot, nor could set up any other kind of Worship, or Worshipers, but such as the Father seeketh ; because he and his Father were one, both in Will and Work. And the Reason and Necessity of this kind of Worship, is added by Christ in the following Words, *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.*

Therefore if Christ had not *only* and *solely* set up this Truth of spiritual Worship, he had been but another *Moses*, and though a better Teacher, yet still but as a *Schoolmaster*, to some higher State of Religion, that was *yet wanted*, and *must be revealed*, if so be that Man was to be restored to his true State of Life, Union, and Happiness in and with the divine Nature. For as God is a Spirit, and our Life is spiritual, so no religious Worship can be in its true Perfection, or bring us into the Possession of our highest Good, till it raises all that is Spirit and Life in us, into Union and Communion with Spirit and Life in God.

If it should here be asked, How we are to become and continue Worshipers of the Father in Spirit and Truth ? It is answered ; All consists in *turning inwards*, in Attention
to

to that, which is daily and hourly stirring, living, and working in our Hearts.

Now though the Scripture no where gives *this Direction in these very Words*, yet, since it is said in Scripture, that God dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, but in the Temple of our Hearts, since the Kingdom of God is said to be within us, and not to come with outward Observation, but to be in us, as a secret, living Seed of the incorruptible Word; since our Hearts is our whole Life, and we are said to live, and move, and have our Being in God, it is directly telling us that we are to *turn inwards*, if we would turn to, and find God.

It is directly telling us, that in what manner we are within, as the Worship is done there, so is God in such manner within us; and that he is no otherwise our God, our Life, our Rest and Happiness, than so far as the Working of our Hearts, is a willing and chusing, a hungering and thirsting to find, feel and enjoy the Life-giving Power of his holy Presence in our Souls.

To be inwardly therefore attentive to God, shewing the Good and the Evil, distinguishing the Light from the Darkness in our own Souls; to listen to the Voice of his *ever speaking Word*, and to watch the Movings of his *ever sanctifying Spirit* within

in us, waiting and longing in the Spirit of Prayer, of Faith and Hope, of Love and Resignation, to be inwardly quickened and revived in the Image, and according to the Likeness of that Son, in whom he is well pleased, is the worshipping of God with our whole Heart and Soul, in Spirit and in Truth.

It is living to God, in and through the Power of Christ, as he lived ; it is praying with him, and by his Spirit, that continual Prayer which he always had, whether speaking to the Multitude, or healing their Diseases, or alone by himself in the Stillness of Nights, and Loneliness of Mountains. For this inward Prayer, in which the whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, loves, worships, and applies to a God, not absent or distant, but to a Trinity of Goodness and Mercy, of Light and Love, of Glory and Majesty, dwelling, and working within us, willing and desiring to do all that in the Temple of our Hearts, which is done and always doing in his own Temple in Heaven, is a Prayer, that only needs outward Words for the sake of others ; and of which it may be said, as Christ said : *Father, I knew that thou always hearest me, but because of the People, which stand by, I said it.*

I begin to apprehend, worthy Sir, that you will think I am gone too far about, and
not

not come close enough to the Matter in hand. But I hope it is not so : I have gone through all that I have said, only to shew, that Church Unity or Communion, is not a matter that depends on any particular Society, or outward Thing, but is compleat, or defective, in such degree, as we live in Unity with, or Contrariety to the inward Spirit and outward Example of Christ. For no Union signifies any thing to us, or our Salvation, but Union with God, through Christ, and nothing unites us to Christ, or makes us to be his, but his Holy Spirit dwelling, and working inwardly and outwardly in us, as it did in him.

This is the only Church Unity, that concerns the Conscience, and when we are in this Unity, we are in Union with Christ, and with every one who is united to him, however distant, or separated from us, by human Inclosures.

I come now to consider the Church under another, and more common Idea of it, namely as external, and about which, all the Christian World is at enmity, strife, and debate.

After Christianity had been a few Ages in the World, it became national, and obtained the Protection, and Patronage of the Princes of this World.

Hence

Hence it was enriched with many Gifts and Privileges, and strengthened by Powers, that were *foreign* to the Nature of it; and Church-men, beginning to quarrel about Christian Doctrines, were supported in their Strife and Division from one another, by the temporal Powers, under which they lived.

This State of the Church hath continued to this Day, where almost every Age hath multiplied the Number of divided Churches, brought forth, by the Union of the civil and ecclesiastical Power.

This State therefore of external Churches, hath the Nature of Things *merely human*, and is subject to such *Alterations, Changes, and Corruptions*, as the Forms and Revolutions of temporal Government all over the World. And therefore the private Christian, who, as such, is a Member of a Kingdom, that is not of this World, has little or no Concern in it.

Without entering into the Merits of divided Churches, which I shall not do here, or any where else; Thus much I think, may with Truth be affirmed, that where the Church and the State are incorporated, and under one and the same Power, all the evil Passions, corrupt Views, and worldly Interests, which form and transform, turn
and

and overturn all outward Things, must be expected often to come to pass, as well in the Church, as in the State, with which it is united.

But as private Christians have no Power, or Call to govern the World, or set up Thrones according to the Principles of Truth and Righteousness, but are by the Spirit of the Gospel obliged to submit to, and be contented with that state of Government, good or bad, under which the Providence of God has placed them, so are they in like manner, to exercise a patient Submission, and Resignation under such an imperfect State of the outward Church, which Providence has not prevented, and only to take care, to be inwardly found such Worshipers in Spirit and in Truth, as the Father seeketh.

I mean not by this, as some have done, that any Evil however great in the Beginning, or continuing of usurped Power, either in the Church or State, loses its evil Nature, and may be called right and good, as soon as Providence has suffered it to become successful.

No, by no means. Success, though always to be owned to have God's Permission, leaves all things in their own Nature, neither Good because successful, nor Bad, because defeated and suppressed.

The

The Wickedness of the Jews conspiring and effecting the Death of Christ, was not only permitted, but suitable to the Designs of Providence, in the Redemption of Mankind.—But that the evil Nature of their Wickedness did not lose its Guilt, because suffered by God to be successful, but still continues, is plain from the Curse of God still abiding upon it to this day.

The Duty of private Christians, with regard to Providence in such Cases, is not to call that Good which before was Evil, or that Evil which before was Good, but patiently to suffer, and humbly acquiesce under all that bad outward Course of Things, either in Church or State, which the Providence of God has not thought fit to prevent, and that for these Reasons: *First*, as fully knowing that all Things must work together for good, to those who love God; *Secondly*, as piously believing that in all successful Wickedness, whether of Princes against their People, or of People against their Princes, there is always *something hid* under it, which in its *way and degree*, will like the successful Wickedness of the Jews towards Christ, help forward that Salvation, for which Christ hath laid down his Life.

Who can say, what a Good, and Blessing, the Christian World had been deprived of,
had

had the righteous Providence of God not permitted the Princes of the heathen World, to make such bloody Havock of the first Christians.

But suppose Errors of the following Kind got into the Church, *viz.* 1. The Scripture Baptism of the whole Body under Water, only as it were mimicked, by scattering a few Drops of Water on a new-born Child's Face. 2. The Supper of the Lord in one Church, held to be Bread and Wine changed into the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, as Bread and Wine, not changed into, but substantially united with the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, mere Bread and Wine, only made Memorials of the Body and Blood of Christ. In one Church this, in another that Form and Manner of Consecration held to be essential; in another, all Priestly Consecration rejected, as rank Superstition. 3. Suppose the original Apostolical Constitution of *Church Assemblies*, where all meet together, that all in their turns, *might prophecy one by one, that all might learn, and all be comforted*, should in some Churches be so changed, that all praying, speaking or prophesying, as from the Power, and Presence of Christ amongst them, was quite prohibited; where

one and the same long, tedious, humanly contrived Form of Worship, is daily, from Year's end to Year's end, to be read by one, who is become their only Speaker and Instructor, not because he alone is daily full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, but because he is either hired to that Office, or because, by some means or other, the Church and Church-yard are become his Freehold. Is not such a State of Church Assemblies, in full contrariety to the first Assemblies, and to the Apostle's Injunction; *quench not the Spirit, despise not Prophesyings?* 4. Suppose again, that in the settled Service of the Church, certain Prayers and Petitions, not according to Truth and Righteousness, or suitable to the Goodness of the Evangelical Spirit, are read, as Prayers for Success in unchristian Wars, Prayers for the Destruction of our Christian Brethren, called our Enemies, Thanksgivings for the violent Slaughter and successful killing of Mankind: When these are made Parts of the Church Service, are we in Obedience to the Providence of God, suffering Things in Church Assemblies to come to this pass, to unite and bear a Part in such Church Service?

My Answer to all this, shall be only personal; that is, what I would do myself, in these supposed Cases.

First,

First, As to any Defects, Mutilation, or Variations in the outward Form, and Performance of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord in the Church, I am under little, or no Concern about them ; and that for this very good Reason,—Because all that is inwardly meant, taught, or intended by them, as the Life, Spirit, and full Benefit of them, is subject to no human Power, is wholly transacted between God and myself, and cannot be taken from me, by any Alteration made by Man, in the outward Celebration of them.

If the Church, in my Baptism, should sprinkle a little Milk, or Wine, instead of Water, upon my Face, it would be no defective Baptism to me, if I had all that inward Disposition of Repentance, of Faith in Christ, to be born again of Him, which was meant, figured, and implied by such Immersion into Water, as was the first Baptism.

The same may be said of the Supper of the Lord, however altered, or varied in its outward Manner from what it was at first, if the inward Truth, pointed at by it, is in me, is loved and adhered to by me, I have all the Benefit that was meant, or could be had by it, when it was kept to

a Tittle in the same outward Form, in which the first Church used it.

And therefore the outward Celebration of these Sacraments is revered by me, wherever they are observed, as standing in the same Place, and significant of the same inward Blessing, as in their first Institution.

As to the forementioned supposed Prayers, though I am present when they are read in the Church, I neither make, nor need I make them, any more my *own Prayers*, then I make, or need to make all the Curses in the Psalms, to be my *own Curses*, when I hear both Priest and People reading them in the Church, as a Part of divine Service. Nor is there any more Hypocrisy, or Insincerity, in one Case, than in the other.

I join therefore in the public Assemblies, not because of the *Purity*, or *Perfection* of that which is *done*, or to *be found* there, but because of that which is *meant* and *intended* by them: They mean the holy, public Worship of God; they mean the Edification of Christians; they are of great Use to many People; they keep the World from a total Forgetfulness of God; they help the Ignorant and Letterless to such a Knowledge of God, and the Scriptures, as they would not have without them.

And

And therefore, fallen as these Church Affsemblies are, from their first spiritual State, I reverence them, as the *venerable Remains* of all that, which once was, and will, I hope, be again, the Glory of Church Affsemblies, *viz.* the *Ministration of the Spirit, and not of the dead Letter.*

And there are two very great Signs of the near Approach of this Day, in two very numerous, yet very different kinds of People in these Kingdoms.

In the one Sort, an extraordinary Increase of new Separations, Particularity of Opinions, Methods, and religious Distinctions, is worked up to its utmost Height. And we see them almost every Day running with Eagerness from one Method to another, in Quest of *Something*, by the Help of a new Form, which they have not been able to find in the old one.

Now, as the Vanity and Emptiness of any Thing, or Way, is then only fully discovered and felt, when it has run all its Lengths, and worked itself up to its highest Pitch, so that nothing remains untried, to keep up the Deceit; so when religious Division, Strife of Opinions, invented Forms, and all outward Distinctions, have done their utmost, have no farther that they can go, nor any thing more to try, then is their

inevitable Fall at Hand ; and if the Zeal was *simple* and *upright*, all must end in this full Conviction, *viz.* That Vanity and Emptiness, Burden and Deceit, must follow us in every Course we take, till we have done with all our own Running, to expect all, and receive all, from the invisible God dwelling in, and blessing our Hearts with all heavenly Gifts, by a Birth of his eternal, all-creating Word, and life-giving Spirit brought forth in our Souls.

The *other Sign* I mentioned, is to be found in another Kind of a much awakened People, in most Parts of these Kingdoms, who in the Midst of the Noise and Multiplicity of all Church-Strife, having heard the still, and secret Voice of the true Shepherd, are turned inwards, and wholly attentive to the inward Truth, Spirit and Life of Religion, searching after the mystical, spiritual Instruction, which leads them from the outward Cry, of a *Lo here, or there, is Christ*, to seek to him and his redeeming Spirit within them, as the only safe Guide from inward Darkness to inward Light ; and from outward Shadows into the Substantial, ever enduring Truth ; which Truth is nothing else, but the *everlasting Union of the Soul with God, as its only Good, through the Spirit and Nature of Christ truly formed*
and

and fully revealed in it.—But to go no farther ; I shall only add, that as yet, I know of no better Way of thinking or acting, than as above, with regard to the universal *fallen State* of all Churches ; for fallen they all are, as certainly as they are divided.

Every Church Distinction is more or less in the corrupt State of every *selfish, carnal, self-willed, worldly minded, partial* Man, and is what it is, and acts as it acts, for its *own Glory*, its *own* Interest and Advancement, by that same Spirit, which keeps the selfish, partial Man solely attached to his *own* Will, his *own* Wisdom, Self-regard, and Self-seeking. And all that is wanting to be removed from every Church, or Christian Society, in order to its being a Part of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, is *that* which may be called its *own, human Will, carnal* Wisdom, and *Self-seeking* Spirit ; which is all to be given up, by turning the Eyes and Hearts of all its Members, to an inward Adoration, and total Dependance upon the supernatural, invisible, omnipresent God of all Spirits ; to the inward Teachings of Christ, as the Power, the Wisdom, and the Light of God, working within them every Good, and Blessing, and Purity, which they can ever receive, either on Earth, or in Heaven.

Under this Light, I am neither Protestant, nor Papist, according to the common Acceptation of the Words.—I cannot consider myself as belonging only to one Society of Christians, in separation and distinction from all others.—It would be as hurtful to me, if not more so, than any worldly Partiality. And therefore as the Defects, Corruptions, and Imperfections, which, some way or other, are to be found in all Churches, hinder not my Communion with that, under which my Lot is fallen, so neither do they hinder my being in full Union, and hearty Fellowship with all that is Christian, Holy, and Good, in every other Church Division.

And as I know, that God and Christ, and Holy Angels, stand thus disposed towards all that is Good in all Men, and in all Churches, notwithstanding the Mixture in them, is like that of Tares growing up with the Wheat, so I am not afraid, but humbly desirous, of living and dying in this Disposition towards them.

*I am, worthy Sir,
With much Truth of Love and Respect,
Your faithful Friend,
And hearty Servant,*

*King's-Cliffe, Feb. 28,
1756,*

L E T-



L E T T E R II.

To the Reverend Mr. S.

My dear Friend and Brother,



H O P E my long Silence has not occasioned your being offended at me, or any Suspicion, that I have disregarded you, or the Matter you wrote upon. If I was to offer at a Reason in excuse of it, it would be an invented one, for it has never been known to myself. But I was contented to know, that my Heart was right towards you, full of all good Will and Desire to serve you, in the Way that God should lead me to it. And so it is come to pass, that you have not heard from me sooner.

It is a great Pleasure to me to think (as you say) that my Letter to you, will also be to two of your Brethren, who stand in the same State of Earnestness, to know how to be faithful and useful in their Ministry, as you do: I hope God will increase your Number.

The

The first Business of a Clergyman awakened by God into a Sensibility, and Love of the Truths of the Gospel, and of making them equally felt, and loved by others, is thankfully, joyfully and calmly, to adhere to, and give way to the Increase of this new-risen Light, and by true Introversion of his Heart to God, as the sole Author of it, humbly to beg of him, that all that, which he feels a Desire of doing to those under his Cure, may be first truly and fully done in himself.

Now the Way to become more and more awakened, to feel more and more of this first Conviction, or Work of God within you, is not to reflect and reason yourself into a farther and deeper Sensibility of it, by finding out Arguments to strengthen it in your Mind. But the one true Way is, in Faith and Love to keep close to the Presence and Power of God, which has manifested itself within you, willingly resigned to, and solely depending upon the one Work of his all-creating Word, and all-quickenings Spirit, which is always more or less powerful in us, according as we are more or less trusting to, and depending upon it.

And thus it is, that by Faith we are saved, because God is always ours, in such
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Proportion as we are his; as our Faith is in him, such is his Power and Presence in us. What an Error therefore, to turn one Thought from him, or cast a Look after any Help but his; for if we ask *all* of him, if we seek for all in him, if we knock only at his own Door of Mercy in Christ Jesus, and patiently wait and abide there, God's Kingdom must come, and his Will must be done in us.

For God is always Present, and always working towards the *Life* of the Soul, and its Deliverance from Captivity under Flesh and Blood. But this inward Work of God, though never ceasing, or altering, is yet always, and only hindred by the Activity of our own Nature, and Faculties, by bad Men through their Obedience to earthly Passions, and by good Men through their striving to be good in their own Way, by their natural Strength, and a Multiplicity of seemingly holy Labours and Contrivances.

Both these sorts of People obstruct the Work of God upon their Souls. For we can co-operate with God no other Way, than by submitting to the Work of God, and seeking, and leaving ourselves to it.

For the whole Nature of the fallen Soul, consists in its being fallen from God, into itself, into a Self-government and Activity,
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under its own Powers broken off from God, and therefore dying to self, as well to our Reason, as our Passions and Desires, is the first and indispensable Step in Christian Redemption, and brings forth that Conversion to God, by which Christ becomes formed and revealed in us. And nothing hinders this Conversion from being fruitful in all Good, and gaining all that we want from God, but the retaining *Something* to dwell in as *our own*, whether it be earthly Satisfaction, or a Righteousness of human Endeavours.

And therefore all the Progress of your first Conviction, which by the Grace of God you have had from above, and from within, consists in the Simplicity of your Faith, in adhering to it, as solely the Work of God in your Soul, which can only go on in God's Way, and can never cease to go on in you, any more than God can cease to be that which he is, but so far as it is stopped by your Want of Faith in it, or trusting to something else along with it. God is found, as soon as he alone is sought; but to seek God alone, is nothing else but the giving up ourselves wholly unto him. For God is not absent from us in any other respect, than as the Spirit of our Mind is *turned* from him, and not left wholly to him.

This *Spirit of Faith*, which not here, or
there

there, or now and then, but every where, and in all Things, looks up to God alone, trusts solely in him, depends absolutely upon him, expects all from him, and does all it does for him, is the utmost Perfection of Piety in this Life. The Worship of God in *Spirit* and *Truth*, can go no higher, it does that which is its Duty to do; it hath all that it Wants, it doth all that it will, it is one Power, one Spirit, one Will, and one Working with God. And this is that Union or Oneness with God, in which Man was at first created, and to which he is again called, and will be fully restored by God and Man being made one Christ.

Stephen was a Man full of Faith and the Holy Ghost. These are always together, the one can never be without the other.

This was *Stephen's* Qualification for the Deaconship, not because of any Thing high or peculiar in that Office, but because the Gospel Dispensation was the opening a Kingdom of God amongst Men, a spiritual Theocracy, in which as God, and Man fallen from God, were united in Christ, so an Union of immediate Operation between God and Man was restored. Hence this Dispensation was called, in Distinction from all that went before it in outward Types, Figures and Shadows, a *Ministration of the Spirit*, that is, an immediate Operation

ration of the Spirit of God itself in Man, in which nothing Human, Creaturely, or depending upon the Power of Man's Wit, Ability, or natural Powers, had any Place, but all Things begun in, and under Obedience to the Spirit, and all were done in the Power and Strength of Faith united with God.

Therefore to be a faithful Minister of this new Covenant between God and Man, is to live by Faith alone, to act only, and constantly under its Power, to desire no Will, Understanding, or Ability as a Labourer in Christ's Vineyard, but what comes from Faith, and full Dependance upon God's immediate Operation in and upon us.

This is that very thing, which is expressly commanded by St. Peter, saying, *If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God, if any Man minister, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth.* For all which he giveth this Reason, which will be a Reason as long as the World standeth, viz. *That in all Things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.* A plain and sufficient Declaration, that where this is not done, there God is not glorified by Christians through Christ Jesus.

God created Men and Angels solely for the *Glory of his Love*; and therefore Angels and Men, can give no other Glory to
God,

God, but that of yielding themselves up to the Work of his creating Love, manifesting itself in the several Powers of their natural Life, so that the first creating Love, which brought them into Being, may go on creating, and working in them, according to its own never-ceasing Will, to communicate Good for ever and ever. This is their living to the Praise and Glory of God, namely by owning themselves, in all that they are, and have, and do, to be mere Instruments of his Power, Presence, and Goodness in them, and to them ; which is all the Glory they can return to their Creator, and all the Glory for which he created them. We can no otherwise give religious Glory to God, than by worshipping him in Spirit and in Truth, seeing Christ has said, that *the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

But we can no otherwise worship God in Spirit and in Truth, than as our Spirit in Truth and Reallity, seeks only to, depends only upon, and in all things adores, the Life-giving Power of his universal Spirit ; as the *Creator, Upholder, and Doer* of all that is or can *be Good*, either in Time or Eternity. For nothing can be Good, but that which is according to the Will of God, and nothing can be according to the Will of God, but that which is done by his own Spirit.

Spirit. This is unchangeable, whether in Heaven, or on Earth. And this is the one End of all the Dispensations of God, however various, towards fallen Man, *viz.* to bring Man into an Union with God. Comply with all the outward Modes and Institutions of Religion, believe the Letter, own the Meaning of Scripture Facts, Symbols, Figures, Representations, and Doctrines, but if you stand in any other use of them, or seek to gain some other Good from them, than that of being *led out of your own Self*, from your *own Will*, and *own Spirit*, that the Will of God, and the Spirit of God, may do all that is willed, and done by you ; however fixed, and steadily you may adhere to such a Religion, you stand as fixed and steadily in your own fallen State. For the Restoration of fallen Man, is nothing else but the Restoration of him to his first State, under the Will and Spirit of God, in and for which he was created.

You may here perhaps, my dear Friend, think that I am speaking too much at large, and not closely enough to the particular Matter of your Enquiry. But my Intention hath been, so to speak to you on this Occasion, as to lay a Ground for a proper Behaviour, under every Circumstance of the outward
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Work of your Ministry. All Things must be set right in yourself first, before you can rightly assist others, towards the attaining to the same State.

I do not mean, that you must be first in a State of Perfection, before you can be fitted to teach others. But I mean that you must first see, *in what* you place your own Perfection, and have the *Witness* in yourself of the *Truth* of it, before you can rightly direct others in the Way to it; otherwise your Instruction would be of such practical Things, of which you had no practical Knowledge.

For this Reason, I have said all that is said above, to help you to set out under a right Sense of all that, which Religion is to do for yourself, and why, and how, and by what means alone, it can be done in you. When these two Things are not notionally, but practically known, and adhered to, then are you enabled, according to your measure, to speak of Things, and Truths of Religion, to those that are ignorant, or insensible of them.

Hence you may learn, what you are chiefly to drive at, in all your Discourses from the Pulpit, and Conversation; namely, to turn the Attention of Men to a Power of Good, and a Power of Evil, both

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of them born and living within them. For in these two Things, or States of the Soul of every Man, lies the full Proof of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption from it.

Were we not naturally evil, by a Birth of Evil essentially born and living in us, we should want no Redemption ; and had we not a Birth of *something Divine* in us, we could not be redeemed. Inward Evil can only be cured or overcome by an inward Good.

And therefore, as all our Salvation is an inward Work, or Struggle of two Births within us, so all the Work of your outward Instruction, must be to call every one home to himself, and help every Heart to know its own State, to seek, and find, and feel his inward Life and Death, which have their Birth, and Growth, and Strife against one another, in every Son of *Adam*.

And as this is the one good Way of Preaching, so it is, of all others, the most powerful, and penetrating into the Hearts of all Men, let their Condition be what it will.

For as these two States are certainly in every Soul of Man, however blended, smothered, and undistinguished, in their Operations for a *Time*, yet they have each
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of them, in some degree, their *bearing Ears*, which though ever so sunk into Dullness, will be forced, more or less, to feel the Power of that Voice, which speaks nothing, but what is, and must be in some sort spoken within themselves.

And this is the true End of outward Preaching, namely, to give loud Notice of the Call of God in their Souls, which though unheard, or neglected by them, is yet always subsisting within them. It is to make such outward Sounds, as may reach and stir up the inward hearing of the Heart. It is so to strike all the outward Senses of the Soul, that from sleeping in an inward Insensibility of its own Life and Death, it may be brought into an awakened and feeling Perception of itself, and be forced to know, that the Evil of Death which is in it, will be its eternal Master, unless the Good of Life that is in it, seeks for Victory in the Name and Power and Mediation of Christ, the only Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory, and who only hath the Keys of Heaven, of Death and Hell in his Hands.

Thus far, and no farther, goes the Labour and Ministry of Man, in the Preaching of the Word, whether it be of *Paul*, or *Ce-phas*.

Hence also you will be well qualified, to open in your Hearers, a right Sense and Knowledge of the Truth and Reality of every Virtue, and every Vice, that you are discoursing upon.

For since all that is Good and Evil, is only so to them, because it lives in the Life of their Heart; they may easily be taught, that no Virtue, whether it be Humility, or Charity, has any Goodness in it, but as it springs in, and from the Heart, nor any Vice, whether it be Pride, or Wrath, is any farther renounced, than as its Power, and Place in the Heart is destroyed. And thus the Insignificancy and Vanity of an outward Formality, of a virtuous Behaviour, and every Thing short of a new Heart, and new Spirit in, and through the Power of Christ, dwelling vitally in them, may be fully shewn to be Self-delusion, and Self-destruction.

Your next great Point, as a Preacher, should be to bring Men to an entire Faith in, and absolute Dependance upon, the continual Power and Operation of the Spirit of God in them.

All Churches, even down to the Socinians, are forced, in obedience to the Letter of Scripture, to hold *something* of this Doctrine.

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But as the Practice of all Churches, for many Ages, has had as much Recourse to Learning, Art, and Science, to qualify Ministers for the preaching of the Gospel, as if it was *merely* a Work of Man's Wisdom, so Ecclesiastics, for the most part, come forth in the Power of human Qualifications, and are more or less full of themselves, and trusting to their own Ability, according as they are more or less Proficients in Science, and Literature, Languages and Rhetoric.

To this, more than to any one other Cause, is the *great Apostacy* of all Christendom to be attributed. This was the Door, at which the *whole Spirit* of the World, entered into Possession of the Christian Church.

Worldly Lusts, and Interests, Vanity, Pride, Envy, Contention, Bitterness, and Ambition, the Death of all that is good in the Soul, have [now, and always had their chief Nourishment, Power, and Support, from a sense of the Merit, and sufficiency of literal Accomplishments.

Humility, Meekness, Patience, Faith, Hope, Contempt of the World, and heavenly Affections (the very Life of Jesus in the Soul) are by few People less earnestly desired, or more hard to be practised, than by great *Wits, classical Critics, Linguists, Historians, and Orators* in Holy Orders.

Now to bring Man to a right practical Knowledge, of that full Dependance upon, and Faith in the continual Operation of the Holy Spirit, as the only Raiser and Preserver of the Life of God in their Hearts, and Souls, and Spirits, it is not enough, you sometimes, or *often* preach upon the Subject, but every thing that you inculcate, should be directed *constantly* to it, and all that you exhort Men to, should be required, only as a means of obtaining, and concurring with, that Holy Spirit, which is, and only can be, the *Life* and *Truth* of Goodness. And all that you turn them from, should be as from something that resists, and grieves that blessed Spirit of God, which always wills and desires to remove, all evil out of our Souls, and make us again to be sanctified Partakers of the Divine Nature.

For as they only are Christians, who are born again of the Spirit, so nothing should be taught to Christians, but as a *Work* of the Spirit; nor any *Thing* sought, but by the *Power* of the Spirit, as well in hearing, as teaching. It is owing to the Want of this, that there is so much Preaching and Hearing, and so little Benefit either of the Preacher or Hearer.

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The Labour of the Preacher is, for the most part, to display Logic, Argument, and Eloquence, upon religious Subjects; and so he is just as much *carried* out of himself, and *united* to God by his own religious Discourses, as the Pleader at the Bar is, by his Law, and Oratory upon Right and Wrong.

And the Hearers, by their regarding such Accomplishments, go away just as much helped, to be new Men in Christ Jesus, as by hearing a Cause of great Equity well pleaded at the Bar.

Now in both these Cases, with regard to Preacher and People, the Error is of the same kind, namely, a trusting to a Power in themselves; the one in an Ability, to persuade powerfully; the other in an Ability, to act according to that which they hear.

And so the natural Man goes on preaching, and the natural Man goes on hearing of the Things of God, in a fruitless Course of Life. And thus it must be, so long as either Preacher or Hearers, seek any thing else but to edify, and be edified in, and through the immediate Power and essential Presence of the Holy Spirit, working in them.

The Way therefore to be a faithful, and fruitful Labourer in the Vineyard of Christ, is to stand yourself in a full Dependance on the Spirit of God, as having no good Power, but as his Instrument, and by his Influence, in all that you do ; and to call others, not to their own Strength or rational Powers, but to a full Hope, and Faith of having all that they want, from God alone ; not as teaching them to be good by Men, but by Men and outward Instruction, calling them to Himself, to a Birth of essential, inherent living Goodness, Wisdom and Holiness from his own eternal Word, and Holy Spirit, living and dwelling in them. For as God is all that the fallen Soul wants, so nothing but God alone, can communicate himself to it ; all therefore is lost Labour, but the total Conversion of the Soul, to the *immediate essential* Operation of God in it.

As to the other Parts of your Office, whether they relate to Things prescribed, or to such as are to be done, according to your best Discretion, there will not be much Difficulty, if you stand in the State as above described.

As to several *outward Forms*, and *Orders* in the Church, they must be supposed to partake, in their Degree, of that Spirit, which

which has so long bore Rule in all Church Divisions. But the private Man, who has sufficient Call to the Ministry, is not to consider, how outward Things should be, according to the Primitive Plan, but how the inward Truth, which is meant by them, may be fully adhered to.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as differently practised in almost every particular Church, may afford ground of Scruple about them, since almost every Church in these Matters, is condemned by all other Churches.

But the Way to be above, and free from these Scruples, is to keep yourself, and your people wholly intent to that *Spiritual Good*, of which these Institutions are the appointed outward Figures, namely to that spiritual Regeneration, which is meant by Baptism, and to that *spiritual Living in Christ*, and Christ in us, which is meant by the Supper of the Lord. And then, though the Sacraments practised by you should have any outward Imperfection in them, they would be of the same Benefit to you, as they were to those, who used them in their first, outwardly perfect Form. And thus you will be led neither to over-rate, nor disregard such use of them, as is according to the present State of the Church. It is only the Inward Regene-
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rate Christian, that knows how to make a right Use of all outward Things. His Soul being in such a *State* of Union with God, and Man, as it ought to be, it takes every Thing by the right Handle, and turns every Thing into a Means of carrying on his Love towards God and Man. To the Pure, all Things are pure.

When you visit the *Sick*, or well *Awakened*, or *dully Senseless*, use no pre-contrived Knowledge, or Rules, how you are to proceed with them, but go as in Obedience to God, as on his Errand, and say only what the Love of God and Man suggests to your Heart, without any Anxiety about the Success of it; that is God's Work. Only see that the Love, the Tendernefs, and Patience of God towards Sinners, be uppermost in all that you do to Man. Think not, that here Severity, and there Tendernefs, is to be shewn; for nothing is to be shewn to Man, *but his Want of God*, nothing can shew him this so powerfully, so convincingly, as Love. And as Love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, so Love is the fulfilling of all the Work of the Ministry.

I am, with my best Wishes

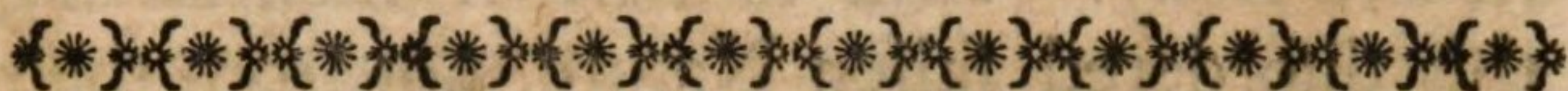
To you and your Brethren,

Your most affectionate Friend,

And willing Servant.

April 10, 1756.

L E T.



L E T T E R III.

To a Clergyman of *Bucks.*


 A M much surpris'd, my Friend,
 that you should still want more to
 be said, about the Doctrine of *Im-*
putation, whether of *Adam's* Sin, or
 the *Righteousness* of Christ to his Followers.
 Our polluted sinful Birth of *Adam*, is all the
 Sin we can have from him; and our *superna-*
tural Birth of Christ, is all the Righteousness
 that we possibly can have from him. Impu-
 tation neither hath, nor can have any Thing
 to do in either Case; Sin and Righteousness
 are both inward and innate Things, and the
 sole Work of the Spirit, that lives in us.
 That which is born of God, is godly, and
 cannot sin; and that which is born of sinful
 Man, cannot be without a sinful Nature and
 Tempers. *Cain* could not possibly have any
 other *natural* Life, than that which was in
Adam; and therefore so sure as *Adam* in Soul,
 Spirit, and Body, was all Sin and Corruption,
 so sure is it, that all his Offspring must come
 from him in the same Depravity of Soul, Spi-
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rit and Body. And to talk of their having this disordered fallen Nature, not from their natural Birth, but by an *outward Imputation* of it to them, is quite as absurd, as to say, that they have their *Hands* and *Feet*, or the whole Form of their Body, not from their natural Birth, but by an outward Imputation of such a Form, and Members to them.— Suppose it was said, that *Adam's* evil and polluted Condition of Body and Soul, was not the natural Effect of his Transgression, but independently of that, came upon him from God's imputing it to him, as his, though it was not his. What a Blasphemy would this be? And yet not less than that, of saying, that his Children have their evil Nature, the sinful State of their Wills and Affections, not by their natural Birth from him, but independently of that, solely from God's imputing such a sinful State to them, that is, that God imputed *Adam's* sinful Nature to *Cain*, though he was by Birth free from Sin, and Born in the Purity and Perfection, in which *Adam* was created; for so he must have been, if his Birth had nothing of sinful *Adam* in it. But if *Cain* was not so born, then he had his Sin, not by an Imputation of another's Sin to him, but plainly in the same Way of natural Birth, as every Man has his natural Life and Form of his Body, from Parents of the same Nature

ture and Form. And indeed, to speak of Sin imputed to a Person that has it not, and so made his, is the same Absurdity, as speaking of Will and Affections, imputed to a Person that has them not, and so made his. For Sin is no where but in, and from the Will and Affections, and therefore to make Sin to be there by Imputation, where it is not, has no more Sense in it, than to make *Will* and *Affections*, to be by Imputation in a Creature that has them not.

As in Adam all dye, says the Text: Is not this the same, as saying, that all Men have their fallen Nature, because born of *Adam*? Say, this does not follow, and then the Matter will stand thus: *In Adam all dye*: But *why*, or *how*? Why because no Man hath the Evil of a mortal fallen Nature from his Birth from *Adam*, but merely by God's *free Imputation* of it to him.

But such a free Imputation of *Adam's* sinful State to his Children, when they had it not by natural Birth, is quite blasphemous, and leaves no room for magnifying the *free Grace* of God in Christ Jesus; since *free Grace* comes only to help Man out of a sinful State which he had not by natural Birth, but came upon him, by God's *free Imputation* of it to him, when he had it not. Thus, the adorable Love of God in his free Grace
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in Christ Jesus, is quite destroyed, upon supposition, that Mankind have not their sinful State from their natural Birth from *Adam*, but by a free Imputation of it by God to them.

Take now the other Part of the Text, *so in Christ shall all be made alive*. Is it not a flat Denial of all this, to say, they are not *made alive* by a Birth of that to which *Adam* died, brought to life again in them, but are *accounted* as if they were alive, by the Imputation of Christ's *Life* to them, but not born in them? Could dead *Lazarus* have been said to have been made alive again, if still lying in the Grave, he had only been *accounted* as alive, by having the Nature of a living Man, only imputed to him?

Our Lord said to a Leper, whom he had cleansed, *Go, shew thyself to the Priest, &c.* But if instead of *cleansing* him, he had bid him go to the Priest, to be *accounted* as a clean Man, by the Imputation of another's Cleanness to him, had he not still been under all the evil of his own Leprosy? Now this is strictly the Case of the Righteousness of Christ, only outwardly imputed to us, and not inwardly born within us.—A Fiction, that runs counter to all that Christ and his Apostles have said of the Nature of
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our Salvation. We want Christ's Righteousness, because by our natural Birth, we are inwardly full of Evil; therefore saith Christ, *except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Does not this place all in a Birth? But a Birth, and outward Imputation, are inconsistent; that which is born in us, cannot be said, to be outwardly imputed to us. *I am the Vine,* saith Christ, *ye are the Branches.* Now if this be a true Representation of the Matter, then these two plain Doctrines of Christ, affirming, 1. The absolute Necessity of a new Birth from above, and 2. Declaring this Birth to be as really brought forth in us, as the Life of the Vine is really in the Branches, do, as far as Words can do it, entirely reject the Notion of a Righteousness imputed to us from without; a Righteousness, that has no more to do with our own Life, after it is imputed to us, than it had a thousand Years before we were born. For that which is not in us, or ours, by a Birth of itself in us, can never be any nearer to us, or have a more real Union with us, after it is *called* ours, than before it was so called. I say *called*, for Imputation, whether of Sin, or Righteousness, if its Power is not living in us, is no more than

than *mere calling* that ours, which is not ours.

It is needless to cite Places of Scripture, affirming that all consists in a Christ revealed, begotten, formed and living in us. Let this one Word of *Paul* suffice, *yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.* He does not say, a Christ who is only called his, or outwardly imputed to him, but the quite contrary, a Christ *who liveth* in him.

Again, if Christ's Holy Nature, be not a Birth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us, then no Virtue, or Power of an Holy Life, can have any more real Existence, or vital Growth in us, than in the Devils, but are only outwardly imputed to us, and not to them, only called ours, and not theirs, though we have no more of them within us, than they have. Thus, be ye *holy, for I am holy*; be ye *perfect, as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect*; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, &c. all these are but vain Exhortations to do, and be, that which is not within our Sphere, but entirely inconsistent with it. For these Virtues are, in their whole Nature, nothing else but the *very Rightousness* of Christ, therefore if that can be only outwardly imputed to us, the same must be said of *all these Virtues*, that they can have no real
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Life or Growth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us. And indeed, unless Christ be truly and essentially born in us, we can have no more of any Christian Virtue, but the empty, outward Name of it : For neither Man, nor Angel ever did, or can thus love God with all his Heart, be holy because God is holy, be perfect as he is perfect, but because there is a Spirit *born and living* in them, which is of God, from God, and partakes of the divine Nature.

Further, say that the *Holy Spirit* is not born and living in us, that his Operation is not inwardly in us, as the Spirit of our Spirit, the Life of our Life, but only outwardly imputed to us, as if he was in us, though he be not there : What a Blasphemy would this be ! And yet full as well, as to say the same of Christ, and his Righteousness. For if Christ was only outwardly imputed to us, the same must, of all necessity be said of the Holy Spirit ; for *where* and *what* Christ is, *there* and *that* is the holy Spirit. How constantly are we told in Scripture, that they *only* are Sons of God, *who are led by the Spirit of God* ; that unless *a Man hath the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* ; that if *Christ be not in us, we are Reprobates*. Now I would ask, can any Man be truly said to be led by the Spirit of the World,

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the Flesh and the Devil, who has nothing of this Spirit *living* in him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Can any Creature be said to be led by the Spirit of Man, who has not the Nature of Man within him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Yes, just as a *Beast* may be said to be a *Newtonian* Philosopher, by having Sir *Isaac's* System outwardly imputed to him.

Take Notice, Sir, that if Christ's righteous, and holy Nature is only outwardly imputed to Christians, then all of them, whether they are called Good, or Bad, are without any Difference as to their inward Man, and all under the same unaltered Evil of their fallen Nature, as much *after*, as they were *before* Christ's Righteousness was imputed to them.—When a good Man has any thing *falsely* laid to his Charge, is not this *outwardly imputing* something to him, that is not his, does not belong to him? But is not his own inward Goodness just in the same fullness of Truth in him, *after* such an Imputation of Evil to him, as it was *before* it was so imputed. Now this is the whole Nature of Imputation; and therefore if the righteous Nature of Christ is only outwardly imputed to the Sinner, it leaves him in all the Evil of his fallen Nature, and can no more make him inwardly good

good, than a good Man can be made inwardly evil, by having an Evil outwardly imputed to him, that is not his.

The Relation between Christ and the fallen Soul, is thus : Christ is the *one Mediator* between God and Man, and that which his Mediation consists in, is the restoring that Life in Man, which was his first created Union with God. Nothing separated Man from God, or made him want a Mediator, but the Loss of his first divine Life; and therefore nothing can mediate, or be a means of Union again between God and Man, but that which can, and doth raise again in Man, that Divine Life which was his first Union with God. Every thing therefore, that is said of this one Mediator, as *redeeming, ransoming, justifying, sanctifying, making Peace, or Reconciliation, &c.* however variously expressed, has no other Nature, or Meaning, but that of making fallen Man, *inwardly alive again* in God.— He in *whom* Christ is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, has just that *same Change* made in him, just that *same* done to him, as he *that has his Sins washed and cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb.* For these different Expressions mean only *one* and the *same* Thing, and that one Thing, is *Christ in us, our Hope of Glory.* This is Justification, Sanctification,

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tification, Redemption, Peace, Reconciliation, and everlasting Union with God.—Triffling therefore, to the last degree, is their *Orthodoxy*, who raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines, on the different Meaning of these Words, and the Danger of not knowing, or not stiffly contending for the blessed Difference between *Justification* and *Sanctification*, &c. Full as triffling, as to raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines on the different Names given to *Jesus Christ*, as *Word of God*, *Son of Man*, *Lamb of God*, *Alpha and Omega*, *Mediator*, *Immanuel*, *Attonement*, *Reconciliation*, *Resurrection*, &c. and the great Danger of ascribing that to Christ, as our *Reconciliation*, which only belongs to him, as called the *Resurrection* and *the Life*.—Figure to yourself such an orthodox Dispute as this, and then you will see the Importance of that pious Zeal, which will not suffer *Justification* and *Sanctification* to encroach upon one another.

What an egregious Folly, to be learnedly laborious in dividing and distinguishing these different Names of Christ, or the different Effects of his purchasing, justifying, or sanctifying our Souls, &c. when all that these Things are told us for, and all the Benefit that we can receive from them, lies
solely

solely in this one Word of Christ, *if any one will be my Disciple* (that is, if any one will have the Benefit of all that I am, and of all that is said of me) *let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me.* Then, and then only, all the different Names of Christ, and all the different Powers ascribed to him, will be, not critically, but blessedly known and understood to be one, as God is one, whether he be called I AM, or the Creator of Heaven and Earth, or the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to proceed : All that is said of the Nature, Office, and Qualities of Christ, in order to be our Redeemer, is so much said of the Necessity of their being essentially found, and realized in every Soul, that is to partake of his Redemption.—If *Christ be not in us, we are none of his.* But how can Christ be in us, but because all that which Christ was, in the Spirit and Nature of his whole Process, is in us, as it was in him ? If the *same Mind be not in us, which was in Christ Jesus* ; if that which *loved*, that which *willed*, that which *suffered* in him, be not the same Spirit in us, we shall never reign with him. He may be truly called a Redeemer, but we are not *his redeemed*, for such as the Redeemer is, such are they that are redeemed.

To him that overcometh, saith Christ, will I grant to sit with me on my Throne, [N. B.] even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his Throne. What becomes now of the vain Fiction of an outward Imputation? Is Christ's Victory here imputed to us? Is not the Contrary as strongly taught us, as Words can do it? To him that overcometh, even as I also overcame.

Can we have fuller Proof, that Christ's righteous Nature must be inwardly born, living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him? how else can we overcome, *even as he overcame*? That Spirit which overcame in Christ, was manifest in the Flesh, for no other End, but that the same conquering Spirit might be born in us. And when that is done, then all is done, by that *Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, Justification, Sanctification, or the new Creature.* For whether you call it by one, or by all these Names, it is the *white Stone with the new Name written in it, which no Man knoweth, but he that hath received it.* And that for this Reason, because it is no *outwardly imputed* Thing, but is the new Name, the new Nature and Spirit of Christ, become *all in all* in us, and so only to be known by those, who have it brought to Life in them.

Again,

Again, *This is my Blood, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins; what follows? Why, Drink ye all of this;—If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;—The Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all Iniquity;—who hath washed us from our Sins in his Blood.* Now to shew you, that all these different Sayings have but one and the same Doctrine, you need only read the following decisive Words: *These are they that came out of great Tribulation, (that is, have trodden the Wine Press with Christ) and have washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.* Here you see is no outward Imputation of the Sufferings of Christ, but *their coming out of great Tribulation, or passing through the whole Process of Christ, was that alone, which made their Robes to be Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.* And no other Doctrine is in this Text, than if it had been said, *these are they, who having denied themselves, taken up their daily Cross, and followed Christ, have thereby washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.* Through all the New-Testament, this is the one Doctrine of Salvation through the Blood of Christ, it is *drinking the Cup, that he drank of, and not the Bitterness of his Cup outwardly imputed to us.*

You tell me, my Friend, that the seraphic *Aspasio* is quite transported with the Thought of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to the Sinner, and that it should in the Account of God, be esteemed as his—It may be so, Transport seems to be as natural to *Aspasio*, as flying is to a Bird. But surely, a more transporting, a more glorious Thing it is, both to the Glory of God, and the Good of Man, that the Sinner is, through the righteous Nature of Christ, born and brought to Life in him, set up again in his first Likeness and Image of God. For if Man's Righteousness is not *essentially* restored in him, as it was essentially in him at the First, has he not less of God in him, by his Redemption, than he had at his Creation? Is it to the Happiness of Man, and the Glory of God, that God has not obtained that *Dwelling* in Man, for which he alone created him?

Is it matter of Transport to think, that fallen Man will to all Eternity live destitute of his first heavenly Nature, his first divine Life, which he had in, and from God? But this must be the Case, if Christ's Righteousness is only *outwardly imputed* to him, and not *essentially* born in him.

Transports, my Friend, are but poor Proofs of Truth, or of the Goodness of the Heart,
from

from whence they proceed. *Martyrdom* has had its *Fools*, as well as its *Saints*, and Zealots may live and dye in a Joy, that has all its Strength from Delusion.

You may see a Man drowned in Tears, at beholding, and kissing a *wooden Crucifix*, and the same Man condemning another, as a *wicked Heretic*, who only honours the *Cross*, by being daily baptised into the Death of Christ.—Nay, so blind is *Opinion-zeal*, that some good Christian Pastors will not scruple to tell you, they could find no Joy in their own State, no Strength, or Comfort in their Labours of Love towards their Flocks, but because they know, and are assured from *St. Paul*, that God never had, nor ever will have, *mercy on all Men*, but that an unknown Multitude of them, are through all Ages of the World, inevitably decreed by God to an eternal Fire, and Damnation of Hell, and an unknown Number of others, to an irresistible Salvation.

Wonder not then, if the *Inquisition* has its pious Defenders, for *Inquisition-Cruelty*, nay, every Barbarity that must have an End, is mere Mercy, if compared with this Doctrine.—And to be in love with it, to draw sweet Comfort from it, and wish it God Speed, is a Love that absolutely forbids the loving our Neighbour, as ourselves, and makes

makes the Wish, that all Men might be saved, no less than a Rebellion against God. —It is a *Love*, with which, the *curst Hater* of all Men, would willingly unite and take Comfort; for could he know from *St. Paul*, that Millions, and Millions of Mankind, are created and doomed to be his eternal Slaves, he might be as content with this Doctrine, as some good Preachers are, and cease going about, as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; as knowing, that his Kingdom, was so sufficiently provided for, without any Labours of his own.

Oh, the Sweetness of *God's Election*, cries out the ravished Preacher! Oh, the Sweetness of *God's Reprobation*! might the hellish Satan well say, could he believe that God had made him a *free Gift* of such Myriads, and Myriads of Men, of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, from the Beginning to the End of the World, and reserved so small a Number for himself. This is the blessed Fruit of the imputation Doctrine.

What a Complaint, and Condemnation is there made in Scripture, of those who sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils? And yet, this Reprobation Doctrine, represents God, as sacrificing Myriads of his own

own Creatures, made in his own Image, to an everlasting Hell.

There is not an Absurdity of heathenish Faith and Religion, but what is less shocking than this Doctrine, and yet so blindly are some zealous Doctors of the Gospel bigotted to it, as to set it forth, as the glorious Manifestation of the *supreme Sovereignty* of God.

My Friend, let any old Woman preach to you, rather than these Doctors.

But to end in one Word, Christ's righteousness is ours, in our Redemption, just in the same manner, as it was *Adam's* in his first Holy Birth. For *Adam* had then no Righteousness in him, but that which was created in Christ Jesus. And that is the one only Reason, why there could be no other Redeemer but Christ, because the Loss of Christ, was that Death which *Adam* died by his Fall; and therefore no Possibility of coming out of his fallen State, but in, and by a Birth of Christ's *righteous Nature*, essentially born and living in him, as it was living in him before he fell.

Little Children, saith St. John, *let no Man deceive you; [N. B.] He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, [N. B.] even as he is righteous.* Therefore to expect, or trust to be made righteous, by the Righteousness of
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another, only outwardly imputed to us, is, according to the Apostle, *deceiving ourselves.*

Either Man, by the *Mediation* of Christ, is *united* again with God, or he is not; if he is not, then he has no more of the *divine Life* in him, after his Redemption, than he had before he was redeemed. But if he is again united with God, as he was at his Creation, then his Redemption must wholly consist in the Birth of a divine Nature and Spirit, essentially brought to Life in him.—That which is Spirit in Man, must be godlike, before it can unite with that Spirit, which is God. And was there not a divine Spirit in Man, truly born of, and proceeding from the Spirit of God, as his real Offspring, no Union of Will, Love, or Desire, could be between God and Man. For this is a Truth, that extends itself through all that is natural, or supernatural, *that Like can only unite with Like.* There is no Separation between Things, but that which is effected by Contrariety. If therefore nothing in Man was a Partaker of the divine Nature, Man must in his whole Nature, be for ever separated from God, and stand in the same Impossibility of being united with him, that two the most contrary Things, do to one another.—So sure
therefore

therefore, as the *Mediation* of Christ, is by himself declared to be for this End, *viz.* *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;* so sure is it, that an *outwardly* imputed Christ, is as absurd in itself, and as contrary to Scripture, as an *outwardly* imputed God.

Farewell.

L E T T E R IV.

In ANSWER to a SCRUPLE.

THAT you may have a full Answer to your Scruple, concerning these Words, *the Folly of Debtor and Creditor*, in the second Part of the *Spirit of Love*, I will set forth the Doctrine from whence it is taken. — Great Part of that Book, is to clear up, and assert the true Scripture Doctrine of the *Nature, Necessity, and Merit* of our Lord's Sufferings and Death, as an *Attonement*, and
Satis-

Satisfaction before God, in the Work of our Redemption.—No Point of Christianity has been more mistaken, in our common Systems of Gospel Doctrine, or given greater Offence than this, and yet nothing clearer, or more reasonably to be believed, when it stands in its own scriptural Manifestation.

Now the right Ground of understanding the true Meaning of every different Expression, relating to Christ, as our Saviour, or Salvation, lies in these two Things : 1. What Christ is in himself. 2. What he does, or intends to do for us.

The Scripture saith, *God was manifested in the Flesh* ; this describes his whole Nature, what he was in himself, viz. the Deity become Man. What he is, and does in us, to us, and for us, is expressed in the following Words, *He was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil* ; and again, *as in Adam all die, so in Christ, shall all be made alive.*

Now according to this Ground, every Expression concerning our Saviour, is to have its true infallible Meaning fixed. Every thing that is said of his *Birth*, his *Life*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, are all of them, both with respect to God, and ourselves, of *one and the same* Efficacy, full of *one and the same* Me-
rit

rit, and all for one and the same End, viz. to destroy in Man the Works of the Devil, and to make all that died in Adam, to be alive again in Christ.

Suppose now, any one of these to be wanting, and the same will follow from it, as if they were all wanting. Had his *Birth* been otherwise than it was, not God as well as Man, He could have made no Beginning of a divine Life in us. Had not his *Life been without Sin*, his *Death* upon the Cross could have done us no Good, nor could he have been the *one Mediator* between God and *sinful* Man. Had his *Sufferings* been less than they were, had there been any Evil, Trial, or Temptation, which had not attacked him, through the whole Course of his Life, with all its Force, he could not have been said, to have *overcome them*. So sure therefore as Christ, as a Son of Man was to *overcome* all that the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, could do to fallen Man; so sure is it, that all the Evils, which they could possibly bring upon fallen Man, were to be *felt*, and *suffered* by him, as absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to prove his victorious Superiority over them. Had he not given up his Body to an ignominious Death, in all the *Horrors of a Soul, that had lost its*
God:

God: He could not have suffered *That* in, and for Man, which every Man must have suffered, who had died in his *fallen State*. — But Christ dying, and sacrificing himself, as he did, in and through that horrible Death, which was fallen Man's Gate to eternal Misery, and conquering *this State* of Man, as he had every evil Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, then it was, that he could say to those, who were all their Life in Fear of *this Death*, be of good Comfort, I have overcome this Death, and that upon the same Ground, as he said to his Followers, under a Sense of worldly Tribulations, *be of good Comfort, I have overcome the World*. And thus his *Death*, had no other Nature, with respect to us, than every other Part of his Process, that was *antecedent* to it, only as it was the last, and greatest, and *finishing* Part of that *redeeming Work*, which was begun by his *divine Birth*, and carried on in, and through his sinless, perfect Life. And as I said, that the Death of Man *unredeemed*, was his Gate into an *eternal Separation* from God, so Christ's Entrance into this Gate of *Damnation*, and pouring out his Blood, thus forsaken of God, had a Suffering in it, that Thoughts can no more conceive, than Words express.

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Hence it is, by way of Eminence, justly said, to be the highest Price, that he paid for us ; and that by his Blood it is that we are washed, and redeemed, not only because of its Greatness in itself, but because it finished, and for ever *completed* the whole redeeming Work, which he had to do for us in the Flesh.—Hence it was, that through the Old Testament, this Sacrifice of his Death, is the great Thing mostly pointed at in all its Sacrifices, Types, and Figures ; hence also is all the Boast of it in the Gospel. Well therefore may the Church, through all Ages, have ascribed so much to the Merit of his Blood shed for us ; well may it have been celebrated, as the one great Price, by which we are ransomed from the Power of Death and Hell ; because, though all that he was, and did, antecedently to it, was *equally necessary* to our Salvation, yet all had been without any effect, unless by his so dying, this *damnable Death* had been *swallowed up in Victory*.

In short, had not Christ been real God, as well as real Man, he could have made no Beginning in the Work of our Salvation, and had he not ended his Life in such a Sacrifice, as he did, he could never have said, *it is finished*.—He therefore, who denieth the Truth, the Certainty, and abso-

lute Necessity of these two essential Points, is in the Abomination of *Socinianism*, and is that very *Liar* and *Antichrist* described by St. *John* in his first Epistle.

Again, though Christ's Death was thus absolutely necessary in the very Nature of the Thing, thus great in its Merits and Effects, yet unless his *Resurrection* had followed, we had been yet in our Sins, nor could he, till risen from the Grave, have purchased a Resurrection for us. *Lastly*, had he not *ascended* into Heaven, he could not have had the Power of *drawing*, as he said, *all Men to himself*.—Every Part therefore of our Saviour's Character, or Process, has its *full* and *equal* Share in all that, which is said of him, as our *Peace* with God, our *Righteousness*, our *Justification*, our *Ransom*, our *Atonement*, our *Satisfaction*, our *Life* and new *Birth*; for all these different Expressions, have no Difference in Doctrine, but whether seperately, or jointly taken, signify nothing else, but this one Thing, that he was the true and full *Destroyer* of all the *Works of the Devil* in Man, and the true *Raiser of a divine Life*, in all that died in *Adam*.

And here, Sir, you are well to observe, that all that Christ was, did, suffered, and obtained, was *purely* and *solely* on the Account,

count, and for the sake of *altering*, or *removing* that which was wrong, evil, and miserable in Man, or in Scripture Words, *God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the World to himself*, that is, taking away from Man every Property, or Power of Evil, that kept him in a State of Separation from God. Thus it was, and to this End, that *God was in Christ Jesus* in his whole Process.

Unreasonably therefore have our scholastic Systems of the Gospel, *separated* the Sacrifice of Christ's Death, from the *other Parts* of his Process, and considered it as something chiefly done with regard to God, to alter, or atone an infinite Wrath, that was raised in God against fallen Man, which Infinity of just Vengeance, or vindictive Justice, must have devoured the Sinner, unless an *infinite* Satisfaction had been made to it, by the Death of Christ.

All this, is in the grossest Ignorance of God, of the Reason and Ground, and Effects of Christ's Death, and in full Contradiction to the express Letter of Scripture. For there we are told, that God is Love, and that the Infinity of his Love was that alone, which shewed itself towards fallen Man, and wanted to have *Satisfaction* done to it; which Love-desire could not be *fulfilled*, could not be *satisfied* with any thing less than Man's full Deliverance from all the

Evil of his fallen State. That Love, which has the Infinity of God, nay, which is God himself, was so immutably great towards Man, though fallen from him, *that he spared not his only begotten Son*; and why did He not spare him? It was because nothing but the incarnate Life of his eternal Son, passing through all the *miserable States* of lost Man, could regenerate his first divine Life in him. Can you possibly be told this, in stronger Words than these, *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; how did He give him? Why, in his whole Process. And to what end did He give him? Why, *that all who believe in him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life*.—Away then with the superstitious Dream, of an *infinite Wrath* in God towards poor fallen Man, which could never cease, till an *infinite Satisfaction* was made to it. All Scripture denies it, and the Light of Nature abhors it.—The *Birth*, the *Life*, the *Death* of Christ, though so different Things, have but one and the same Operation, and that Operation is solely *in Man*, to drive all Evil out of his fallen Nature, and delight the Heart of God, that desires his Salvation.—God is Love, and has no other Will towards Man, but the Will of Love. That Love, which from itself began the Creation of an holy *Adam*, from itself began the Redemption of a fallen *Adam*.

Adam.—The Death of Christ was a Sacrifice from the Love of God the Son towards Man, to overcome thereby that *damnable* Death, which, otherwise, every Son of *Adam* must have died ; it was a Sacrifice offered to the same Love, in God the Father ; a Sacrifice, equally loved and desired by both of them, because, in the Nature of the Thing, as absolutely necessary to alter and overcome that Evil, which belonged to Man's *State of Death*, as the Incarnation of the WORD, was absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to make Man to be alive again in God.

This is the one only true, and full Confutation of *Socinianism*.

But to have Recourse to a supposed *Wrath*, or *vindictive Justice*, in a God incensed towards fallen Man, in order to confute the *Socinian*, who denies the Necessity, and Effects of Christ's Death, is only opposing one great Falsity with another.—For *Wrath* has no more Place in God, than *Love* has in the Devil. Wrath began with Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, and can have no possible Existence any where, or in any Thing, but where Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, have their Power of working.

Do not, my Friend, be here so furious, as to say, that if it was strictly true, that there was *no Wrath in God*, you would *burn*

your Bible : For if it was not strictly true, you would never have had a Bible to burn ; nor any more Messages from Heaven about Man's Salvation, than from Hell.—For if you will have *Wrath* in the most high God, you can have no other, or better a God, than that which the atheistical *Spinoza* invented.

For if Wrath is in the Supreme God, then Nature is in God, and if so, then God is Nature, and *nothing else* ; for Nature cannot be above itself. Therefore if Nature is in the most high God, then the lowest Working of Nature, is the true Supreme God.—And so instead of a *supernatural* God, who created Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth, and all Things else, are the only God.

This is the atheistical Absurdity, that necessarily follows from the supposing a *Wrath* in God ; for Wrath can no more be any where, but in *Nature*, than *Storms* and *Tempests* can be, where there is nothing that *moves*.

Let me here, Sir, observe to you the bare-faced Calumny, that Dr. *Warburton* has ventured to cast upon me, in charging my Writings with *Spinozism*, though all that I have wrote for these last twenty Years, has been such a full Confutation of it, as is not to be found in any Book, that has been purposely wrote against it. Had I only proved,

as I have done, by a Variety of Proofs, that Wrath cannot possibly be in the true God, I had sufficiently confuted *Spinozism*; for if not Wrath, then nothing of *Nature* is in God. But I have gone much farther, and have, in my *Appeal*, the *Book of Regeneration*, the *Spirit of Prayer*, the *Spirit of Love*, and the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, opened the true Ground of the unchangeable Distinction between God and Nature, making all Nature, whether temporal or eternal, its own Proof, that it is not, cannot be God, but purely and solely the WANT of God, and can be nothing else in itself but a restless, painful Want, till a *supernatural* God manifests himself in it.—This is a Doctrine, which the Learned of all Ages have known nothing of; not a Book antient or modern in all our Libraries, has so much as attempted to open the *Ground* of Nature, to shew its *Birth* and *State*, and its essential unalterable Distinction from the one *abyssal*, *supernatural* God; and how all the Glories, Powers, and Perfections of the hidden, unapproachable God, have their wonderful Manifestation in Nature and Creature. This is a Blessing reserved by God for these last Times, to be opened in his chosen Instrument, the poor, illiterate *Behmen*. And this I will venture to say, that He who will declare War against him, has no Choice of

any other Weapons, but Raillery and Reproach. To call the blessed Man, a *possessed Cobler*, will be doing something; to call his Writings, *senseless Jargon*, may stand his learned Adversary in great stead; but if he tries to overcome him any other Way, his Success will be like his, who knocks his Head against a Post.—But no more of this here.

And now, Sir, what shall I say of my learned, accusing Doctor? Why only this, that if he knows how to forgive himself, then there will be one Thing at least, in which we are both of us like-minded.

A Word or two now to yourself and Friends, who are so loath to own a God who is all Love: Let me tell you, if you will have Wrath in the Supreme God, you must have a God, in whom is Selfishness, Envy, and Pride, with all the Properties of fallen Nature. For as it is impossible for one of these to be without the other in the Creature, so if any one of them was in God, all the other must be there. They are the four essential Elements of Hell, or fallen Nature, which mutually beget, and are begotten of one another; where one is, there are all of them, and where all are not, there cannot be one of them. Every Pride consists of three Things, Selfishness, Envy, and Wrath. And so of every one of them, take which you will, it consists of the other three,

three, so that to separate them, is to separate a Thing from itself.

Divine Love is just as contrary to them, as God is to the Devil; and where Love is not, there God is not, and where the Work is not *wholly* the Working of Love, it is no Work of God, but the *selfish, wrathful, proud envious* Working of the diabolical Nature, fallen from its first blessed Subjection to, and Union with the *supernatural God of Love*.

To talk (as some do) of a *good Wrath* in God, which is only so called, because it has a *Likeness* to, and Produces *like Effects* to those that come from Wrath in the Creature, is but calling that a good Wrath, which is like a *bad* Wrath, and is no better, no wiser, than to talk of a good Envy, a good Pride in God, which are only so called, because they have a *Likeness* to that, which is a *bad* Pride, and a *bad* Envy in the Creature. Can any Thing be more profanely absurd than this? Which yet is the best that can be said by those, who will have it the *Glory* of God, to be wrathful, who think all is lost, that the gospel Salvation is blasphemed, if the *same* Love that created Man in Glory, should be his only Redeemer, when he had fallen from it. Not con-

considering, that Salvation could never have come into the World, but because, all that Good and Blessing, which Love can be, and do to the Creature, must be done, and doing for ever and ever, by that first creating God, whose Name and Nature, whose Will and Working, is Love, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.

And now, Sir, need I say much more, to remove your Scruple about the following Passage in the *Spirit of Love*, “ No
 “ Wrath in God, no fictitious Atonement,
 “ no Folly of Debtor and Creditor, no
 “ Suffering for Suffering’s sake, but a Christ
 “ suffering and dying, as his *Jame Victory*
 “ over Death and Hell, as when he rose
 “ from the Dead and *ascended* into Hea-
 “ ven*.”

I said *Folly of Debtor and Creditor*, because Christ’s overcoming Man’s *damnable Death*, by his victorious Passage through it, has nothing in it that has any Likeness to the Transaction of a Debtor paying his Creditor; nothing was done in it by way of *Payment* of a Debt, any more than Christ paid a Debt for *Lazarus*, when he raised him from the Dead, or paid a Debt for the Man born Blind, whom he helped to seeing Eyes. For the Good that is done

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* *Spirit of Love*, Part, II. p. 131.

us by the Death of Christ, is a Good that relates *solely* to ourselves. Nothing in it, is given to, or received but by ourselves; it overcomes, and saves us from our *own Evil of Death*, just as *that*, which Christ did to *Lazarus*, and the *blind Man*, overcame the Death that was *in* the one, and the Darknefs that was in the other.

You appeal to a Parable of our Lord's, which has no more Relation to the *Nature* and *Efficacy* of Christ's Death, than the Parable of the *Tares of the Field*. St. Peter saith, *how oft shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven Times?* Christ answereth, *not untill seven Times, but untill seventy Times seven.* And then he sets forth this Doctrine of continual Forgiveness in the following Parable.

The Kingdom of God is likened to a certain King, who would take Account of his Servants, &c. Read the whole Parable, and you will be forced to see, that nothing else is intended to be taught by it, but that one Conclusion, which Christ draws from it: *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your Hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.* All that the Parable saith, is neither more nor less, than is said in these other Words, *Be ye Merciful, as your Father which is in Heaven*

Heaven is merciful: Again, the Doctrine of this Parable, quite overthrows that, which systematic Doctors, intend by Debtor and Creditor; for their Doctrine is, that the injured Authority of God must have full Satisfaction made to it, and thence it is, that they ground the Necessity of so great a Payment, as Christ made to it. Whereas this Parable of the Kingdom of God, sets forth a King, [N. B.] frankly forgiving, and not requiring any Payment at all, either from the Debtor himself, or from any one else for him.—Can there therefore be a greater Folly, than to appeal to this, and the like Scriptures, to make God a Creditor, whose vindictive Wrath against his Debtor, will not be appeased, till full Payment is made to it? And what a blind Persisting is it in the same Folly, to urge the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors, as another Proof, that God is that Creditor, who will be fully paid the Debts, that are due to him? For surely, if God requires us to expect, and pray for the Forgiveness of our Debts, it is badly concluded from thence, that therefore full Payment of them, must be made.—The Truth is, this Petition teaches the same frank Forgiveness, as the foregoing Parable, and is
utterly

utterly inconsistent with the Doctrine of an *infinite Satisfaction*, necessary to be made: For if so, then the Petition ought to have been thus, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, [N. B.] when *full Payment is made*, either by themselves, or by some one else for them.

In a Word, a *vindictive Wrath* in God, that will not forgive, till a Satisfaction equal to the Offence, is made to it, sets the Goodness of God in a lower State, than that which has been found in Thousands of Mankind. The Truth of the Matter, is this, the *Divinity* of Christ, and his whole Process through Life and Death, was absolutely *necessary in the Nature of the Thing*, to raise Man out of the Death of Sin, into a heavenly Birth of Life. And the Necessity of all this, is grounded upon the Certainty of Man's Fall, from a divine, into a bestial Life of this World. The Socinian Blasphemy consists in the Denial of these Points, the Deity of Christ, and the Fall of Man, and the Necessity of Christ's Death.—Our scholastic Doctors, own the Fall of Man, but know, or own Nothing of the true Nature and Depth of it. They own the Truth of Christ's Divinity, and the Necessity of his Sufferings; they plead for the Certainty of these Things

Things from scripture Words, but see not into the *Ground* of them, or in what, the *absolute Necessity* of them consists.—Hence it is, that when opposed by *socinian* Reasoning, they are at a Loss how to support these great Truths, and are forced to *humanize* the Matter, and to suppose such a *vindictive Wrath* in God, as usually breaks forth in great Princes, when a Revolt is made, against their sovereign Authority.

What a paltry Logic, to say, God is *Righteousness* and *Justice*, as well as *Love*, and therefore his Love cannot help, or forgive the Sinner, till his Justice, or righteous Wrath has Satisfaction?—Every Word here, is in full Ignorance of the Things spoken of. For what is *Love* in God, but his *Will to all Goodness*? What is *Righteousness* in God, but his *unchangeable Love* of his *own Goodness*, his *Impossibility* of loving any thing else but it, his *Impossibility* of suffering any thing that is Unrighteous, to have any Communion with him? What is God's *forgiving* sinful Man? It is nothing else in its whole Nature, but God's making him *Righteous* again. There is no other Forgiveness of Sin, but being made free from it. Therefore the compassionate Love of God, that forgives Sin, is no other, than God's *Love* of his *own*
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Righteousness, for the Sake of which, and through the Love of which, he makes Man righteous again. This is the *one Righteousness* of God, that is *rigorous*, that makes *no Abatements*, that must be *satisfied*, must be fulfilled in every Creature that is to have Communion with him. And this Righteousness that is thus *rigorous*, is nothing else but the unalterable *Purity* and *Perfection* of the divine Love, which from Eternity to Eternity can love nothing but its own Righteousness, can will nothing but its own Goodness, and therefore can will nothing towards fallen Man, but the Return of his lost Goodness, by a new Birth of the divine Life in him, which is the *true Forgiveness* of Sins.—For what is the sinful State of Man? It is nothing else, but the Loss of that divine Nature, which cannot commit Sin; therefore the *forgiving* Man's Sin, is in the Truth and Reality of it, nothing else, but the Revival of that Nature in Man, which *being born of God sinneth not*. Lastly, Let me ask these Dividers of the divine Nature, what different Shares, or different Work, had the *Righteousness*, and the *Love* of God in the Creation of Man? Was there then something done by the Love of God, which ought not to be ascribed to the Righteousness

ousness of God? Who can be so weak, as to say this? But if the Love and the Righteousness of God, is one, as God is one, and had but one Work in the *Creation* of Man, it must be the highest Absurdity, to say, that in the *Redemption* of Man, the Love, and the Righteousness of God, must have, not only different, but *contrary* Works, that the Love of God cannot act, till the Righteousness of God, as something *different from it*, is first satisfied.

All that, which we call the *Attributes* of God, are only so many human Ways of our conceiving that *abyssal All*, which can neither be spoken, nor conceived by us. And this Way of thinking, and speaking of God, is suitable to our Capacities, has its good Use, and helps to express our Adoration of him, and his Perfections. But to conclude, and contend, that there must therefore be *different Qualities* in God, answerable, or according to our different Ways of thinking, and speaking of his Perfections, is rather *blaspheming*, than truly glorifying his Name, and Nature. For *omnipotent Love*, *inconceivable Goodness*, is that *Unity* of God, which we can neither conceive, as it is in it self, nor divide into this, or that.—The Importance of the Subject I have been upon, has led me farther than I intended. But for
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the full Illustration of it, I refer you to the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love*. And so committing you to a God, who has no Will towards you, but in, and through the Life, and Death, the Spirit and Power of the Holy Jesus, to deliver you from all your natural Evil, and make you his beloved Son, in whom, he can be well pleased to all Eternity, I bid you farewell.

July 18, 1757.



L E T T E R V.

To a CLERGYMAN in the North of *England*.

My dear Brother,

I V E as you now do, in such
 L Activity of Spirit, and multiplied
 Ways of being good, and though
 you was to live half an hundred
 Years longer, you would stick in the same
 Mire, and end your Life in the same Com-
 plaints, as filled your last Letter to me.—
 You tell me, that after all the *great Change*
 you have made in *your Life*, you find no-
 thing of that *inward Good* and Satisfaction,
 G which

which you have so much expected, and more especially since you have been a Reader of the Books, recommended by me.

But, Sir, you quite mistake the Matter, you have not changed *your Life* ; for that which is, and only can truly be called *your Life*, is in the same State it was when I first knew you.—Nothing is your *Life*, whether it be good or bad, but *That* which WILLS and HUNGERS in you ; and your *own* Life neither is, nor can be any thing else but this.—Therefore nothing reaches your Life, or can make a real Change in it, from bad to good, from Falseness to Truth, but the *right* Will and the *right* Hunger.—Practise as many Rules as you will, take up this or that new Opinion, be daily reading better and better Books, follow this or that able Man, the *Bread of Life* is not there.—Nothing will be fed in you, but the Vanity and self-conceited Righteousness of your own old Man. And thus it must be with you, till all that is within you is become *one Will*, and *one Hunger* after that which Angels eat in Heaven.

But now, if Will and Hunger are the whole of every natural Life, then you may know this great Truth with the utmost Certainty, namely, that *Eating* is the one Preservation of every Life, from the
highest

highest Angel in Heaven, to the lowest living Creature on Earth.—That which the Life eats not, that the Life has not.—Now every thing that lives on Earth, is a Birth or Production of the astral, elementary *Fire, Light, and Spirit*, to which Water is always essential, and it continues in Life, tastes and enjoys the Good of its Life, no longer than these Powers and Virtues of the Stars and Elements are *essentially* and continually eaten by it.

It is just so with the immortal, heavenly Life of the Soul, it is a Birth of those same Powers, in their highest Glory, in the *invisible World*; a World, where the Triune Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, brings forth a triune glorious Habitation for itself, of Fire, Light, and Spirit, opening an Infinity of Wonders, Births, and Beauties in a chrystal transparent Sea, called the Kingdom of Heaven.

Out of these Powers, or out of this Kingdom of Heaven, are the Births of all holy, angelic Creatures; nothing lives or moves in them, but that Fire, Light, and Spirit, which comes as a Birth from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and nothing feeds, keeps up, and exalts this heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, but the hidden, inconceivable, supernatural Trinity, which is before, and

deeper than all Nature, and can only manifest itself, and communicate its Goodness, by such an outward Birth of its own unapproachable Glory.—And here you may find a glorious Meaning of those Words of our Lord, saying, *my Kingdom is not of this World*, because it is a Kingdom of those heavenly Powers of the Triune God, which give Food and Nourishment, Purity and Perfection to the Fire, Light, and Spirit of those divine Creatures, which are to be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect, in his own heavenly Kingdom.

Here therefore, in this spiritual Eating of that same *invisible* Food, which gives Life, and Perfection of Life to all the Angels of God, and not in any human Contrivances, or Activity of your own, are you to place your all, as to the Change of your Life; it all consists in the right *Hunger*, and the right *Food*, and in nothing else.

The Fall of *Adam*, and the Origin of all Sin and Misery, began in his Lust and Hunger after the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Kingdom of this World. By this, he left, and lost the Food which Heaven gives.—He died to all the Influences and Enjoyments of his first Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his vital Union with God, in the Kingdom of Heaven.—All the Evil that
was

was hid in this earthly Creation, and its numerous Creatures, opened, and diffused itself with all the Power of a poisonous Food, through his whole Soul and Body.—But in all this, nothing more came upon him, or was done to him, than that which his own Hunger had eaten.—Here you have the fullest Demonstration, how every Change in the *Life* of Man is, and only can be made, namely, by *hungering*, and *eating*.—*Adam* had not fallen, had known no Death, or Extinction of that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his first Birth in God, but because he hungered after the State of the animal Life in this World, which has no other Fire, Light, and Spirit in it, but that which gives a transitory Life, of diverse, contrary Lusts and Appetites, to all the Beasts, Birds, and Insects.

This is the Doctrine of the Old Testament, concerning the Power of Hunger and Eating in the first *Adam*.—On the other hand, in conformity to this, and in full Proof of the Truth of it, that it must have been so; the second *Adam*, the Lord from Heaven, in the New Testament, has declared, that Hunger and Eating is that alone, which can help fallen Man to that first heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, with the spiritual Flesh and Blood that belonged

to it ; saying again and again, in a Variety of the strongest Expressions, this great Truth, That except a Man eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, he hath no Life in him, that is, no Life of that celestial Body and Blood, which *Adam* lost, and which alone can live in the Fire, Light, and Spirit of Heaven.

Every Spirit that is creaturely, and every Desire of the Spirit, has always something bodily, as its own Birth. No spiritual Creature can begin to be, but by beginning to be bodily.—For creaturely Existence, and bodily Existence, is the same Thing ; the Spirit is not, cannot be in the *Form* of a Creature, till it has its Body ; and its Body is the Manifestation of Spirit, both to itself, and other Beings.

Live in the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ, and then the celestial, transparent, spiritual Body of Christ's Flesh and Blood, is continually forming itself, and growing in and from, and about your Soul, till it comes to the fullness of the Stature in Christ Jesus ; and this is your true, substantial, vital eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ, which will afterwards become your Body of Glory to all Eternity.—And though your astral Reason, and outward Senses, whilst you are in *Adam's*

dam's bodily Flesh, know nothing of this inward Body of Christ, yet there it is, as surely as you have the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ; for where the true Spirit of Christ is, there is his true spiritual Body.

On the other hand, live to Selfishness, to diabolical Pride, Wrath, Envy, and Covetousness, and then nothing can hinder these Tempers, from forming within you such a spiritual Body to your Soul, as that which Devils have, and dwell, and work in.

Be as unwilling as you will, through learned Wisdom, or Fear of Enthusiasm, to believe this, your Unbelief can last no longer, than till *Adam's* Flesh and Blood leave you, and then, as sure as your Soul lives, you will, and must have it living, either in the spiritual Body of fallen Angels, or in the spiritual Body of the redeeming Jesus.—Oh, Sir, trifle away no more Time in Many Matters, your first spiritual Body must come again.—Without it, you are the very Man that came to the Marriage Feast, not *having on a Wedding Garment*.—He was bound Hands and Feet, and cast into utter Darkness, that is, he was the chained Prisoner of his own dark, hellish, spiritual Body, which had been all his Life growing up in him, from that which his Soul had daily eaten, and

hungered after; and so was become those very Chains of Darknes, under which the fallen Angels are reserved unto the Judgment of the great Day.

Now there is no being saved, or preserved from this Body of Chains and Darknes, but by the one Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness that is in Christ Jesus, and by eating that, which begets heavenly spiritual Flesh and Blood to the Soul.—The two Trees of Paradise, with their two Fruits, *viz.* of Death to the Eater of one, and Life to the Eater of the other, were infallible Signs, and full Proofs, that from the Beginning to the End of the World, Death and Life, Happiness and Misery, can proceed from nothing else, but that which the Lust and Hunger of the Soul chuseth for its Food.—Now spiritual Eating is by the Mouth of Desire, and Desire is nothing else but Will, and Hunger, therefore that which you will, and hunger after, that you are continually eating, whether it be good, or bad, and that, be it which it will, forms the *Strength* of your Life, or which is the same thing, forms the *Body* of your Soul. If you have many Wills, and many Hungers, all that you eat is only the Food of so many spiritual Diseases, and burdens your Soul with a Complication of inward Distempers.—And under

der this Working of so many Wills, it is, that religious People have no more Good, or Health and Strength from the true Religion, than a Man who has a Complication of bodily Distempers, has from the most healthful Food. For no Will or Hunger, be it turned which way it will, or seem ever so small or trifling, is without its Effect.—For as we can have nothing but as our Will works, so we must have always some Effect from it.—It cannot be *insignificant*, because nothing is *significant*, but that which it does.

Do not now say, that you have this *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, and yet find not the Food of Life by it.—For as sure as you are forced to complain, so sure is it, that you have it not.—*Not my Will, but thine be done*; when this is the *one Will* of the Soul, all Complaints are over, then it is, that *Patience* drinks Water of Life out of every Cup; and to every Craving of the old Man, this one Hunger continually says, *I have Meat to eat, that ye know nothing of.*

Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done, is the one Will, and one Hunger, that feeds the Soul with the Life-giving Bread of Heaven. This Will is always fulfilled, it cannot possibly be sent empty away, for God's Kingdom must manifest itself with all its Riches

Riches in that Soul, which wills nothing else; it never was, nor can be lost, but by the Will, that seeks something else. Hence you may know with the utmost Certainty, that if you have no inward Peace, if religious Comfort is still wanting, it is because you have more Wills than one. For the Multiplicity of Wills, is the very Essence of fallen Nature, and all its Evil, Misery, and Separation from God lies in it; and as soon as you return to, and allow only this one Will, you are returned to God, and must find the Blessedness of his Kingdom within you.

Give yourself up to ever so many good Works, Read, Preach, Pray, visit the Sick, build Hospitals, cloath the Naked, &c. yet if any thing goes along with these, or in the Doing of them you have any thing else, that you will and hunger after, but that *God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*, they are not the Works of the New-born from above, and so cannot be his life-giving Food.—For the new Creature in Christ, is that one Will, and one Hunger, that was in Christ; and therefore where that is wanting, there is wanting that new Creature, which alone can have his Conversation, which alone can daily eat and drink at God's Table, receiving

ceiving in all that it does, continual Life from *every Word, that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.*

From what Word, and from what Mouth of God? Why only from that hidden, supernatural Power of the Triune Deity, which *speaks*, and *breaths* continual Nourishment to that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, in and from which, all that are about the Throne of God, have their *inward Joy* above all Thought, and their *outward Glory*, that can only be figured, or hinted to us, by Pearls, Saphires, and Rainbow Beauties.

It is from this Power of the Triune God, working in the Fire, Light, Spirit, and spiritual Water, or Body of your new-born Creature, that all the Good, and Comfort, and Joy of Religion, which you want, is to be found, and found by nothing, but the Resurrection of that divine, and heavenly Nature, which came forth in the first Man.

Do not take these to be too high flown Words, for they are no higher, than the Truth; for if that which is in you, is not as high as Heaven, you will never come there.—That heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which makes the angelic Life to be all Divine, must as certainly be your inward Likeness to God; and that which God is, and works in Angels, that he must be, and
work

work in you, or you can never be like to, or equal with them, as Christ has said. — To be outwardly Glorious, as they are, you must stay till this Corruptible shall have put on Incorruption, but to have the same inward Glory of the same celestial Fire, Light, and Spirit, burning, shining, and breathing in your inward Man, as Angels have, belongs to you, as born at first of the triune Breath of the living God, and born again of Christ, out of *Adam's* Death, to have, and be, all that by a Wonder of Redemption, which was your divine Birth-right at first by a Wonder of Creation.

And now, my dear Friend, chuse your Side : Would you be honourable in Church, or State, put on the whole Armour of this World, praise that which Man praises, cloath yourself with all the Graces and Perfections of the *Belles Lettres*, and be an Orator, and Critic, as fast as ever you can, and above all, be strong in the Power of flattering Words.

But if the other Side is your Choice ; would you be found in Christ, and know the Power of his Resurrection ; would you taste the Powers of the World to come, and find the continual Influences of the Triune God, feeding and keeping up his divine Life in your triune Soul, you must
give

give up all for that *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, which keeps the Angels of God in their full Feasts, of ever new, and never-ceasing Delights in the nameless, boundless Riches of Eternity.

Think it not hard, or too severe a Restraint, to have but one Will, and one Hunger; it is no harder a Restraint, than to be kept from all that can bring forth Pain, and Sorrow to your Soul; no greater Severity, than to be excluded from every Place, but the Kingdom of God.—For to have but this one Will, and one Hunger, is to have every Evil of Life, and all Enemies put under your Feet. It is to have done with every Thing, that can defile, betray, disappoint, or hurt that eternal Nature, which must have its Life within you.—On the other hand, every Thing that is not the Effect and Fruit of this one Will, and one Hunger, but added to your Life by a selfish Will, and worldly Hunger, must sooner or later, be torn from you with the utmost Smart, or become Food for that gnawing Worm, which dieth not.

Do you ask, how you are to come at this one Will, and one Hunger, I refer you to no Power of your own, and yet
refer

refer you to that which is within yourself.

Angels in Heaven, are not good and happy by any Thing they can *do* to themselves, but solely by that which is *done* to them.—Now that holy Spirit, which does God's Will in Heaven, and is the Goodness and Happiness of all its Inhabitants, that same Spirit is every Man's Portion upon Earth, and the Gift of God within him.—It is but lost Labour, to strive by any Power of your Reason, or Self-activity, to work up this one Will and one Hunger within you, or to kindle the true Ardency of a divine Desire, by any thing that your natural Man can do.—This is as impossible, as for fallen *Adam* to have been his own Redeemer, or a dead Man to give Life to himself.—The one Will, and one Hunger which alone can eat the true Nourishment of the divine Life, is nothing else but the *divine Nature* within you, which died in *Adam* no other Death, but that of being suppressed and buried for a while, under a Load and Multiplicity of earthly Wills.

Hence it is, that nothing can put an End to this Multiplicity of Wills in fallen Man, which is his Death to God, nothing can be the Resurrection of the divine Nature within him, which is his only Salvation,

vation, but the Cross of Christ, not that wooden Cross, on which he was crucified, but that Cross on which he was crucified through the whole Course of his Life in the Flesh. It is our Fellowship with him on this Cross, through the whole Course of our Lives, that is our Union with Him, it alone gives Power to the divine Nature within us, to arise out of its Death, and breath again in us, in one Will, and one Hunger after nothing but God.

To be like-minded with Christ, is to live in every Contrariety to Self, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, as he did; this is our belonging to him, our being one with him, having Life from him, and washing our Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.—For then, and then only are we washed, and cleansed by his Blood, when we drink his Blood, and we drink his Blood, when we willingly drink of the Cup that He drank of.

Again, not to be like-minded with Christ, is to be seperated from him.—To have another Mind than he had, is to be in the State of those, who crucified him. Such as the Redeemer was, such are they that are redeemed.—as *Adam* was, such are they that are born of him.—Life from *Adam*, and Life from Christ, is the one single Thing,

Thing, that makes the one our Destroyer, the other our Redeemer.—But to have done, cast not about in your Mind, how you are to have the one Will, and one Hunger, which is always eating at God's Table, and continually fed with the Bread of Life; the Thing is already done to your Hands. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, saith Christ, the same as if he had said, the *Way* is no where, the *Truth* is no where, the *Life* is no where, but in me. What Room therefore for any learned Contrivances, or further Enquiry about the Matter? Follow Christ in the Denial of *all the Wills of Self*, and then all is put away that seperates you from God: The heaven-born new Creature will come to Life in you, which alone knows, and enjoys the Things of God, and has his daily Food of Gladness in that manifold BLESSED, and BLESSED, which Christ preached on the Mount.

Tell me then no more of your new Skill in *Hebrew* Words, of your *Paris* Editions of all the antient Fathers, your compleat Collection of the Councils, Commentators, and Church Historians, &c. &c. Did Christ mean any thing like this, when he said, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*? Did the Apostle mean any thing like
like

like this, when he said, *No Man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost?*—Great, good, and divine Teachers, you say, were many of the Fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and divine is He, who is always teaching within you, ever standing and knocking at the Door of your Heart, with the Words of eternal Life.

You perhaps may ask, why I go on writing Books myself, if there is but one true, and divine Teacher? I answer, though there is but one Bridegroom, that can furnish the Blessing of the Marriage Feast, yet his Servants are sent out to invite the Guests.—This is the unalterable Difference between Christ's Teaching, and the Teaching of those, who only publish the glad Tydings of him. They are not the Bridegroom, and therefore have not the Bridegroom's Voice. They are not the *Light*, but only sent to bear Witness of it. And as the *Baptist* said, *He must increase, but I must decrease*; so every faithful Teacher faith of his Doctrine, it must decrease, and end, as soon as it has led to the true Teacher.

All that I have written for near thirty Years, has been only to shew, that we have no Master but Christ, nor can have any living divine Knowledge, but from his holy
H Nature

Nature born and revealed in us.—Not a Word in favour of *Jacob Behmen*, but because, above every Writer in the World, he has made all that is found in the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Nature, to be one continual Demonstration, that *Dying* to self, to be *born again* of Christ, is the one only possible Salvation of the Sons of fallen *Adam*.

But I will have done, as soon as I have given you a little Piece of History, which your friend *Academicus*, has given of himself: “ When I had, says he, taken my Degrees in the University, I consulted several great Divines to put me in a Method of studying Divinity.—It would take up near half a Day to tell you the Work, which my learned Friends cut out for me. One told me, that *Hebrew* Words are all; that they must be read without Points, and then the Old Testament is an opened Book. He recommended to me a cart Load of Lexicons, Criticks, and Commentators upon the *Hebrew* Bible.—Another tells me, the *Greek* Bible is the best, that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many Places, and refers me to a large Number of Books learnedly writ in Defence of it.—Another tells me that Church-history is the main Matter,

“ ter, that I must begin with the first Fa-
“ thers, and follow them through every
“ Age, not forgetting to take the *Lives*
“ of the *Roman* Emperors along with me,
“ as striking great Light into the State of
“ the Church in their Times. Then I
“ must have Recourse to all the Councils
“ held, and the Canons made in every
“ Age: Which would enable me to see
“ with my own Eyes, the great Corrup-
“ tions of the Council of *Trent*. Another,
“ who is not very fond of antient Matters,
“ but wholly bent upon *rational* Christi-
“ anity, tells me, I need go no higher
“ than the *Reformation*; that *Calvin* and
“ *Cranmer* were very great Men; that *Chil-*
“ *lingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie
“ upon my Table; that I must get an entire
“ Set of those learned Volumes wrote a-
“ gainst Popery in King *James's* Reign; and
“ also be well versed in all the Discourses,
“ which Mr. *Boyle's*, and Lady *Moyer's* Lec-
“ tures have produced; and then, says he,
“ you will be a Match for our greatest Ene-
“ mies, which are *popish* Priests, and mo-
“ dern Deists.—My Tutor is very *liturgical*;
“ he desired me, of all things, to get all
“ the Collections, that I can, of the *antient*
“ Liturgies, and all the Authors that treat
“ of such Matters, who, says he, are very

“ learned and very numerous. He has been
“ many Years making Observations upon
“ them, and is now clear, as to the Time,
“ when certain little Particles got En-
“ trance into the Liturgies, and others were
“ by Degrees dropt.—He has a Friend a-
“ broad in search of antient MSS. Litur-
“ gies ; for by the by, said he, at Parting,
“ I have some Suspicion, that our Sacra-
“ ment of the Lord’s Supper is *essentially*
“ defective, for want of having a little Wa-
“ ter mixed with the Wine.—Another
“ learned Friend told me, that the *Clemen-*
“ *tine Constitution* is the Book of Books ;
“ and that all that lies loose, and scattered
“ in the New Testament, stands there in
“ its true Order and Form. And though
“ he will not say, that Dr. *Clarke*, and Mr.
“ *Whiston*, are in the Right, yet it might
“ be useful to me to read all the *Arian* and
“ *Socinian* Writers, provided I stood upon
“ my Guard, and did it with Caution.—The
“ last Person I consulted, advised me to get
“ all the Histories of the Rise and Progress
“ of Heresies, and of the Lives and Cha-
“ racters of Heretics.—These Histories, he
“ said, contract the Matter, bring Truth
“ and Error close in view ; and I should find
“ all that collected in a few Pages, which
“ would have cost me some Years to get to-
“ gether.

“ gether. He also desired me me to be well
 “ versed in all the *casuistical* Writers, and
 “ chief *Schoolmen*, for they debate Matters
 “ to the Bottom, dissect every Virtue, and
 “ every Vice, and shew how near they may
 “ come together without touching. And
 “ this Knowledge, he said, might be very
 “ useful, when I came to be a *Parish* Priest.
 “ Following the Advice of all these Coun-
 “ sellors, as well as I could, I lighted my
 “ Candle early in the Morning, and put it
 “ out late at Night. In this Labour I had
 “ been sweating for some Years, till *Rusti-*
 “ *cus*, at my first Acquaintance with him,
 “ seeing my Way of Life, said to me, had
 “ you lived about seventeen Hundred Years
 “ ago, you had stood just in the same Place,
 “ as I stand now.—I cannot read, and there-
 “ fore, says he, all these hundreds of thou-
 “ sands of Doctrine and Disputing Books,
 “ which these seventeen Hundred Years have
 “ produced, stand not in my Way; they
 “ are the same Thing to me, as if they had
 “ never been. And had you lived at the Time
 “ mentioned, you had just escaped them all,
 “ as I do now, because, though you are a
 “ very good Reader, there were then none
 “ of them to be read.—Could you there-
 “ fore be content to be one of the primitive
 “ Christians, who were as good as any that
 “ have been since, you may spare all this
 “ Labour.—It is not easy for me, says *Aca-*

“ *demicus*, to tell you how much Good I
“ received from this simple Instruction of
“ honest Master *Rusticus*.—What Project
“ was it, to be grasping after the Knowledge
“ of all the Opinions, Doctrines, Disputes,
“ Heresies, Schisms, &c. which seventeen
“ Hundred Years had brought forth, through
“ all the Extent of the Christian World!
“ What Project this, in order to be a *Divine*,
“ that is, in order to bear true Witness to
“ the Power of Christ, as a Deliverer from
“ the Evil of earthly Flesh and Blood, and
“ Death and Hell, and a Raiser of a new
“ Birth and Life from above! For as this is
“ the divine Work of Christ, so He only is
“ a true and able *Divine*, that can bear a
“ faithful Testimony to this *divine* Work of
“ Christ.—How easy was it for me to have
“ seen, that all this Labyrinth of learned
“ Enquiry, into such a dark, thorny Wilder-
“ nefs of Notions, Facts, and Opinions,
“ could signify no more to me now, to my
“ own Salvation, to my Interest in Christ,
“ and obtaining the holy Spirit of God, than
“ if I had lived before it had any Begin-
“ ning. But the blind Appetite of Learning,
“ gave me no Leisure to apprehend so plain
“ a Truth.—Books of Divinity indeed, I
“ have not done with, but will esteem none
“ to be such, but those that make known to
“ my Heart, the *inward Power and Redemp-*
“ *tion of Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for
“ any

“ any thing even from such Books, but that
 “ which I ask of God in Prayer, *viz.* How
 “ better to know, more to abhor, and resist
 “ the Evil that is in my *own Nature*, and
 “ how to obtain a *Supernatural Birth* of the
 “ divine Life brought forth within me. All
 “ besides this is *Pushpin* *.

March 5, 1753.

God be with you.

* *Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 100.

L E T T E R VI.

In Answer to a QUESTION.

Y O U tell me, Sir, that after a twenty Years Zeal, and Labour in Matters of Religion, it has turned to so little Account, that you are forced, most earnestly to desire a speedy Answer to this Question, *Where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth?*

Let me first premise thus much. Every Man in his fallen State, has all that in him, though in a State of *Death*, and *Hiddenness*, which was the *living* Glory, and Perfection of the first created Man. Just as the *Root* of the Lilly, in the Winter's Cold, hath all that in it, though as in a State of *Death*, which was the Glory and Beauty of the Summer's Flower.—What is

hidden in the Root of the Lilly, lies no longer in its seeming Death, than till the Spring-Sun calls forth its Life.—Now, one *divine Dispensation* after another, is to do that same to the fallen Soul, which the Spring, and daily advancing Sun does to the Lilly Root; namely, to call it out of its State of Death, and make something of its first Glory come to life, and spring forth out of it. Hence it is, that *the Kingdom of God* (which was that to which *Adam* died) *is like to Treasure hid in a Field*; and again, *the Kingdom of God is within you*. But this could not be true, unless all that Glory, which *Adam* lost, was still preserved, as a *Seed*, or shut-up *Root* of Life within him: And all this, through the Mercy, and *free Grace* of God, who foreseeing the Fall of *Adam*, willed, that a *Seed* of his first Glory, should be preserved in him; declared, and made known to him, by a *Seed of the Woman*, which through the Word made Flesh, should, in spite of Death and Hell, grow up to the *Fullness of the Stature in Christ Jesus*.

And as the Kingdom of Heaven, is every Man's Treasure, as surely within him, as his own Soul, so that which hides, and covers it from us, is that *awakened, bestial* Life, which is called *Adam* in us, and in which, the immortal Soul, that was born for Heaven, is wedded to the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the
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Lust of the Eyes, and the *Pride of Life*, and subject to the Workings of that Satanical Nature, which our Lord calls the *Prince of this World*.—And thus it is, that every Man comes into this World in a twofold State; *Adam* and *Christ* are both born in him.—And if this was not the State of Man, nothing within you, would, or could ask, as you have done, or have any Anxiety after the Truth. And your being either led from this true Knowledge of your State, or having never been sensible of it, is the Reason of your having made so many religious Enquiries in vain, both from yourself, and other People.—For nothing can tell you the Truth, or establish you in a just and solid Discernment of Right from Wrong, in Doctrines, Opinions, and Practices of Religion, but this home Knowledge of yourself, namely, that *Christ* and *Adam*, are not only both of them *essentially* within you, but the *whole* of you; that nothing is Life or Salvation, but that, which is the Life and Growth of *Christ* in you, and that all that is done from the *Life*, the *Power* and *natural* Capacity of the *Adamical* Nature, is heathenish, is mere Vanity and Death, however gloriously set forth by the natural Gifts of Wit and Learning.

Religion has no Good in it, but as it is the Revival, and Quickening of that divine Nature, which your first Father had from
God,

God, and nothing can revive it, but that which first created it. God is no otherwise your God, but as He is the God of your Life, manifested in it; and He can be no otherwise the God of your Life, but as his Spirit is living within you.—Satan is no other Way knowable by you, or can have any other Fellowship with you, but as his evil Spirit works, and manifests itself along with the Workings of your own Spirit.—*Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you*; but he is no where to be resisted, but as a working Spirit *within you*, therefore to resist the Devil, is to turn from the evil Thoughts, and Motions that arise within you. *Turn to God, and he will turn to you*: But God is an universal Spirit, which you cannot locally turn to, or from; therefore to turn to God, is to cleave to those good Thoughts and Motions which proceed from his holy Spirit, dwelling and working in you.—This is the God of your Life, to whom you are to adhere, listen, and attend, and this is your worshipping him in Spirit and Truth. And That is the *Devil that goeth about as a roaring Lion*, who has no Voice, but that which he speaks within you. Therefore, my Friend, be at home, and keep close to that which passes within you, for be it what it will, whether it be a Good, in which you *delight*, or an Evil, at which you *grieve*, you could have

have neither the one, nor the other, but because a holy God of Light and Love is essentially dwelling in you. Seek therefore for no other Road, nor call any Thing the Way to God, but solely that, which his eternal, all-creating WORD, and SPIRIT worketh within you. For could any Thing else have been Man's Way to God, the WORD *had not been made Flesh*.

The last Words in your Question, viz. *To be in the Truth*, are well expressed, for to be in the Truth, is the finished State of Man returning to God, thus declared by Christ himself, *ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*; free from the Blindness and Delusion of your own natural Reason, and free from Forms, Doctrines and Opinions, which others would impose upon you. To be in Truth, is to be, where the first holy Man was, when he came forth in the Image and Likeness of God.—When he lost Paradise, he lost the Truth; and all that he felt, knew, saw, loved, and liked of the earthly, bestial World, into which he was fallen, was but mere Separation from God, a Vail upon his Heart, and Scales upon his Eyes.—Nothing of his *first Truth* could be spoke of to him, even by God himself, but under the Vail of earthly Things, Types, and Shaddows. *The Law was given by Moses*; but *Moses* had a Vail upon his Face,
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the *Law* was a Vail, *Prophecy* was a Vail, *Christ crucified* was a Vail, and all was a Vail, till *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, in the POWER of his HOLY SPIRIT. Therefore to be in the Truth, *as it is in Jesus*, is to be come from under the Vail, to have passed through all those *Dispensations*, which would never have begun, but that they might end in a Christ *spiritually* revealed, and *essentially* formed in the Soul. So that now, in this *last Dispensation* of God, which is the first Truth itself restored, nothing is to be thought of, trusted to, or sought after, but God's *immediate, continual* Working in the Soul, by his Holy Spirit. This, Sir, is the *Where* you are to go, and the *What* you are to do, to be *in the Truth*. For the Truth as it is in Jesus, is nothing else but Christ come in the Spirit, and his coming in the Spirit, is nothing else but the first *lost Life* of God, quickened, and revealed again in the Soul.—Every thing short of this, has only the Nature of outward Type and Figure, which in its best State, is only for a Time.—If therefore you look to any Thing but the Spirit, seek to any Power, but that of the Spirit, expect Christ to be your Saviour, any other Way, than as he is *spiritually* born in you, you go back from the *Grace and Truth, which came by Jesus*, and can at best be only a *legal Jew*, or a self-righteous *Pharisee*;

risee; there is no getting farther than these States, but by being born of the Spirit, living by the Spirit, as his Child, his Instrument, and holy Temple, in which he dwells, and works all his good Pleasure.—Drop this full Adherence to, and Dependence upon the Spirit, act as in your own Sphere, be something of yourself, and through your own Wisdom, &c. and then, though all that you say, or do, is with the outward Words of the *spiritual* Gospel, and in the outward Practices of the *spiritual* Apostles, yet for all this, you are but there, where those were, who worshipped God with the Blood of Bulls and Goats; for [N. B.] Nothing but the Spirit of God, can worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

But you will perhaps say, that you are still but where you was, because you know not how to find the *continual Guidance* of the holy Spirit.—If you know how to find your own Thoughts, you need not be at a Loss to find the Spirit of God. For you have not a Thought within you, but is either from the Good of the *Spirit*, or from the Evil of the *Flesh*. Now the Good and the Evil that are within you, and always more or less sensible by turns, do each of them teach you the *same Work* and Presence of the Spirit of God. For the Good, could not appear as Good, nor the Evil, be *felt* as Evil,

Evil, but because the *immediate* Working of the Spirit of God, *creates*, or *manifests* this Difference between them, and therefore be in what State you will, the Power of God's Spirit within you, equally manifests itself to you; and to find the *immediate, continual*, essential Working of the Spirit of God within you, you need only know what Good, and Evil are felt within you. For all the Good that is in any Thought or Desire, is so much of God within you, and whilst you adhere to, and follow a good Thought, you follow, or are led by the Spirit of God. And on the other hand, all that is selfish and wicked in Thought, or Affection, is so much of the Spirit of Satan within you, which would not be known, or felt, as evil, but because it is contrary to the *immediate, continual* Working of the Spirit of God within you. Turn therefore inwards, and all that is within you, will demonstrate to you, the Presence, and Power of God in your Soul, and make you find, and feel it, with the same Certainty, as you find and feel your own Thoughts. And what is best of all, by thus doing, you will never be without a living Sense of the *immediate* Guidance and Inspiration of the holy Spirit, always equal to your Dependance upon it, always leading you from Strength to Strength in your
inward

inward Man, till all your Knowledge of Good and Evil, is become nothing else, but a mere Love of the one, and mere Averfion to the other.—For the *one Work* of the Spirit of God, is to diftinguifh the Good, and Evil, that is within you, not as in Notion, but by Affection ; and when you are wholly given up to this new-creating Work of God, fo as to ftay your Mind upon it, abide with it, and expect all from it, This, my Friend, will be your Returning to the Rock, from whence you was hewn, your drinking at the Fountain of Living Water, your walking with God, your living by Faith, your putting on Chrift, your continual hearing the WORD of God, your eating the Bread that came down from Heaven, your fupping with Chrift, and following the Lamb wherever he goeth.

For all thefe feeming different Things, will be found in every Man, according to his Measure, who is wholly given up to, and depending upon the bleffed Work of God's Spirit in his Soul.

But your Miftake, and that of moft Chriftians, lies in this ; you would be Good by fome outward Means, you would have *Methods, Opinions, Forms, and Ordinances* of Religion, alter and raife your fallen Nature, and create in you a new Heart, and

a new Spirit, that is to say, you would be Good in a Way that is altogether *impossible*, for Goodness cannot be brought into you from *without*, much less by any Thing that is Creaturely, or the Action of Man; this is as impossible, as for the Flesh to *sanctify* the Spirit, or for Things temporal, to *give Life* to Things that are eternal.

The Image and Likeness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are in every Man, *antecedent* to every outward Work, or Action that can proceed from him: It is God thus within him, that is the sole Cause that any Thing can be called Godly, that is done, observed, or practised by him. If it were not so, Man would only have his *Being* from God, but his *Goodness* from himself.

All Man's *outward good* Works, are only like his *outward good* Words; he is not Good, because he is frequent in the Use of them, they bring no Goodness into him, nor are of any Worth in themselves, but as a good, and godly Spirit speaks forth itself in the Sound of them. This is the Case of every outward, creaturely Thing, or Work of Man, be it of what Kind it will, either *Hearing*, *Praying*, *Singing*, or *Preaching*, &c. or practising any outward Rules, and Observances; they have only the Goodness of the outward *Jew*, nay, are as vain, as *sounding Brass*,
and

and tinkling Cymbals, unless they be solely the Work, and Fruits of the Spirit of God: For the *divine Nature*, is that alone, which can be the Power to any good Work, either in Man, or Angel.

When a Man, first finds himself stirred up with religious Zeal, what does he generally do? He turns all his Thoughts *outwards*, he runs after *this*, or *that* Man, he is at the Beck of every *new Opinion*, and thinks only of finding the Truth, by resting in this, or that Method, or Society of Christians. Could he find a Man, that did not want to have him of his Party, and Opinion, that turned him from himself, and the Teachings of Man, to a God, not as historically read of in Books, or preached of in this, or that Society, but to a God *essentially* living and working in every Soul, him he might call a Man of God; as leading him from himself to God, as saving him from many vain Wanderings, from fruitless Searchings into a Council of *Trent*, a Synod of *Dort*, an *Augsberg* Confession, an *Assembly's* Catechism, or a *thirty nine* Articles. For had he an hundred Articles, if they were any Thing else but a hundred Calls to a Christ come in the Spirit, to a God within him, as the only possible Light, and Teacher of his Mind, it would be a hundred Times better for him, to be without them.—For all Man's Blindness and Misery lies in this, that he has lost the

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Knowlege of God, as *essentially* living within him, and by falling under the Power of an earthly, bestial Life, thinks only of God, as living in some other World, and so seeks only by Notions, to set up an Image of an absent God, instead of worshipping the God of Life, and Power, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.—Whoever therefore teaches you to expect great Things from this, or that sort of Opinions, or calls you to any thing as *saving*, and *redeeming*, but the *Manifestation* of God in your own Soul, through a Birth of the holy Nature of Christ within you, is totally ignorant of the whole Nature, both of the *Fall*, and the *Redemption* of Man. For the *first* is nothing else, or less, than a *Death* to the divine Life, or Christ-like Nature, which lived in the first Man; and the *other*, is nothing else, but Christ new-born, formed, and revealed again in Man, as he was at the first. These two great Truths are the most strongly asserted by Christ, saying, *if any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily, and follow me.* Let him *deny himself*, is the fullest Declaration, and highest Proof, that he has lost his *first* divine and heavenly Nature, that he is not *that Self*, which came first from God, or he could not be called to deny it.—Say, if you will, that he has not lost that first heavenly Life in God, and then you must say, that our Lord calls him to deny, crucify, and renounce that
holy,

holy, and godlike Self, which was the first Gift of God to him.

To read whole Libraries on these Matters, is only to be bewildered in the Strife of Fictions, and Contradictions about them. But to read this one single Line of Christ, is to be led into the open, full Truth of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption. And indeed, if we were but freed from the Babel of Opinions, which have so long confounded the first Truths of the Gospel, it would be plain from every Part of it, that nothing could be called the *Fall* of Man, but his Loss of the divine Life, or Nature, nor any thing be called his *Redemption*, or the real Means of it, but *solely That*, which God *is*, and *does* in him. For what can be a Good, or work Good in Man, but God, or the divine Nature in him? All the divine Truths, that ever came from God, speak only to the *Pearl* of the divine Nature, that is *hidden* in our *earthly Field* of Flesh and Blood, because nothing else wants them, or has any Capacity to receive them; that which is Divine, can only receive the divine Things from God. And thence it is, that unless a *Man be born again from above*, it is not possible for him to *see, or enter into the Kingdom of God*, that is, the divine Life must arise again, in the Power of a new Birth, or there is nothing in fallen Man, that can partake of the Kingdom

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dom of God. And the Reason is, because *the Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, and therefore not possible to be any where, but where it proceeds from the Holy Ghost. Thou *shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength*. Now what is this God, that you are thus to love? Is it some *abstract Idea*, that learned Men have helped you to form of him? No such thing. This would be but a poor Fiction of God, and a poor Fiction of Love.—God is *all Good*, the *only Good*, and there is nothing Good besides him, therefore to love God with all your Heart, &c. is to love *all Goodness*, and to love *nothing* else but Goodness, and then, and only then, do you love God with all your *Heart, and Soul, and Strength*.—But now, to what Purpose could this Precept of such a Love be given to Man, unless *he essentially* partook of the Divine Nature? For to be in Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, all Love of God, and yet have nothing of the Nature of God within you, is surely too absurd for any one to believe. So sure therefore as this Precept came from Truth itself, so sure is it, that every Man (however loath to hear of any Thing but Pleasures, and Enjoyments in this vain Shadow of a Life) has yet a divine Nature concealed within him, which,
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when suffered to hear the Calls of God, will know the Voice of its heavenly Father, and long to do his Will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.

The Conclusion then, is this, if to love God with your whole Heart, and Soul, is to love *all Goodness*, and *nothing else but Goodness*; and if all that is done without this Love, whether in religious Duties, or common Life, is but mere *Separation* from God, then it must be the grossest Blindness, to believe you can have any Love of God, or Goodness in any Duties you perform, any further, or in any other Degree, than as the Eternal, Holy Spirit of God, lives and loves in you.

Again, to see the Divinity of Man's Original, you need only read these Words: *Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. For what could Man have to do with the Perfection of God, as the Rule of his Life, unless the Truth and Reality of the divine Nature was in him? Could there be any Reasonableness in this Precept, or any Fitness to call us to be good, as God is good, unless there was that in us, which is in God? Or to call us to the Perfection of an *heavenly Father*, if we were not the real Children of his *heavenly Nature*? Might it not be as well, to bid the *heavy Stone* to fly, as it's *flying Father* the Eagle doth?

But this Precept from the Lip of Truth, is another full Proof, that by the *Fall*, a *Death*, or Suppression is brought upon our first divine Life, and also that it is yet in a State, capable of being revived again, in us. For if it was not in a State of Death, or suppressed in us, there could be no Need of calling us to live according to it; for every Being naturally acts according to the Life, that is manifested in it. Nor could we be called to be heavenly, but because the heavenly Nature has it's Seed in our Soul, in a Readiness to come to Life in us.

Lastly, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*, is another full Proof, that God is in us of a Truth, and that the holy Spirit hath as certainly, an *essential Birth* within us, as the Spirit of this World hath. For this Precept might as well be given to a *Fox*, as to a Man, if Man had not something *quite Supernatural* in him. For mere Nature, and natural Creature, is nothing else, but mere Self, and can work nothing but to, and for itself. And this, not through any Corruption, or Depravity of Nature, but because it is Nature's best State, and it can be nothing else, either in Man, or Beast.

I say unto you, love your Enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you, &c. Every Word here is Demonstration, that nothing but the
new

new Birth from above, can be a Christian. There is no other Nature, or Spirit that can breath forth this *universal Love and Benevolence*, but *that same*, which laying aside its own Glory, came down from Heaven, to forgive, to love, to save, and die for a whole World of Enemies and Sinners.

This is the Spirit of Christ, that must as *essentially* live and breath in you, as it did in him, or all Exhortations, to do as he did, to walk as he walked, are but in vain. The natural Man is in full Seperation from this Holiness of Life, and though he had more Wisdom of Words, more Depth of Literature, than was in *Cicero*, or *Aristotle*, yet would he have as much to die to, as the grossest Publican, or vaineſt Pharisee, before he could be in Christ, a new Creature. For the highest improved natural Abilities, can as well ascend into Heaven, or cloath Flesh and Blood with Immortality, as make a Man like-minded with Christ in any one divine Virtue. And that for this one Reason, because God, and divine Goodness, are inseparable.

No Precept of the Gospel, supposes Man to have any Power to effect it, or calls you to any natural Ability, or Wisdom of your own to comply with it. Christ and his Apostles called no Man, to overcome the Corruption and Blindness of fallen Nature, by

learned Cultivation of the Mind. The Wisdom of the learned World, was the same pitiable Foolishness with them, as the grossest Ignorance. By them, they only stand thus distinguished, the one brings forth a *Publican*, which is often converted to Christ, the other a *Pharisee*, that for the most part, condemns him to be crucified. They (Christ and his Apostles) taught nothing but Death, and Denial to all Self, and the Impossibility of having any one divine Temper, but through Faith, and Hope of a new Nature, not *born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.*

To speak of the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as *only an Assistance*, or an *occasional Assistance*, is as short of the Truth, as to say, that Christ shall *only assist* the Resurrection of our Bodies. For not a Spark of any divine Virtue can arise up in us, but what must wholly and solely be called forth, by that same Power, which alone can call our dead Bodies, out of the Dust and Darkness of the Grave.

If you turn to your own Strength, to have Christian Piety, and Goodness; or are so deceived, as to think, that Learning, or logical Abilities, critical Acuteness, Skill in Languages, Church-Systems, Rules and Orders, Articles and Opinions, are to do that for you, which the Spirit of Christ did, and only
could

could do for the first Christians ; your diligent Reading the History of the Gospel, will leave you as poor, and empty and dead to the divine Life, as if you had been only a diligent Reader of the History of all the Religions in the World.—But if all that you trust to, long after, and depend upon, is that Holy Spirit, which alone made the Scripture-Saints able *to call Jesus Lord* ; if this be your one Faith, and one Hope, the divine Life, which died in *Adam*, will find itself alive again in Christ Jesus. And be assured, that nothing but this *new Birth*, can be the Gospel Christian, because nothing else can possibly love, like, do, and be that, which Christ preached in his divine Sermon on the *Mount*. And be assured also, that when the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit that ruleth in you, there will be no *hard Sayings* in the Gospel ; but all that the heavenly Christ taught in the Flesh, will be as Meat and Drink to you, and you will have no Joy, but in walking, as he walked, in saying, loving, and doing, that which he said, loved, and did.—And indeed, how can it be otherwise ? How can Notions, Doctrines, and Opinions about Christ, what he was, and did, make you in him a new Creature ? Can any one be made a *Sampson*, or a *Solomon*, by being well versed in the History of what they were, said, or did ?

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Ask then, my Friend, no more, where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth ; for you can have the Truth, no where, but in Jesus, nor in him, any farther, than as his whole Nature, and Spirit is born within you.

Farewell.



L E T T E R VII.

To a Person of Quality.

Madam,

Had the Honour of your Ladyship's Letter, and no want of true
 I Regard for your Ladyship, or the
 Subject, has been the Occasion of my delaying this Answer so long. I am in some Hopes, that the Person that wanted it, may, by this Time, have found something better than it, by being left to God and himself, and that I have done more for him by my Silence, than I should have done by my Writing.

To be always tampering with Physicians, upon every Occasion, is the Way to lose all natural Soundness of Health; and to be continually talking, and enquiring about the Nature of Distempers, and the Powers of Medi-

Medicines, for the Head, the Heart, the Spirits, and Nerves, is the Way to lose all true Judgment, either of our own Sicknefs, or Health.

It is much the same, with regard to our spiritual Health and Constitution, we do much Hurt to it, by running after spiritual Advice on every Occasion, and wanting the Help of some *human Prescription*, for every Fear, Scruple, or Notion, that starts up in our Minds, and so weaken the true Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, which if left to itself, would do all that we want to have done.

If it be asked, What this *Soundness* of our *spiritual Constitution* is? It may be answered, that it is a *State or Habit of such humble, total Resignation of ourselves to God, as by Faith, and Hope expects all from Him alone.* This is the Health, and Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, and nothing is Health in the Soul, but this State.

And if we left all our incidental, accidental, sickly Notions, and Imaginations that so frequently attack our Minds, if we left them to be overcome, and done away by the Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, [N. B.] We should never fail of Success.

How this pious and worthy Person came to think of leaving his Parish, or what Scruples occasioned his doubting, whether he should stay in it, I cannot guess, and therefore can
say

say nothing to them. I should have thought, that such a Change as he found in himself, his Parish, and Neighbourhood, should have every thing in it, that could render his Situation comfortable to him.

The greatest Danger that new Converts are liable to, especially if they are young, arises from their conceiving something great of their Conversion, and that great Things are to follow from it. Hence they are taken up too much with themselves, and the supposed Designs of God upon them. They enter into Reasonings, and Conjectures how they shall be, and do something extraordinary, and so lose that Simplicity of Heart, which should think of nothing but of dying *to Self*, that the Spirit of God might have time and place to create, and form all that is wanting in their inward Man.

There is nothing more plain and simple than the Way of Religion, if *Self* is but kept out of it; and all the Perplexities, and Scruples which pious Persons meet with, chiefly arise from some Idea they have formed, of a Progress they ought to make in order to be *That*, which *Self* would be. But Piety makes little Progress till it has no Schemes of its own, no Thoughts or Contrivancies to be any Thing, but a *naked Penitent*, left wholly, and solely in *Faith* and *Hope* to the divine Goodness. Every Contrivance for
human

human Help, from this, or that, be it what it will, is at best but dropping some Degree, of that Fulness of Faith and Hope, and Dependence upon God, which only is, and only can be our Way of finding Him, to be the Strength and God of our Life.

Nothing but the Life of God, opened by his Holy Spirit within us, can be the Renewal of our Souls, and we shall want this Renewal no longer, than whilst we are seeking it in something, that is not God. The Faith that ascribes all to God, and expects all from him, cannot be disappointed.

Nothing could hinder the *Centurion* from having, that which he asked of Christ, because his Heart could thus speak, *Lord I am not worthy, that thou shouldest come under my Roof, speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed.*

He that has *this Sense* of Himself, and *this Faith* in God, is in the Truth and Perfection of Religion: If we knew the Goodness of this State, we should be always content with the Simplicity of it, and let every thing else come, and go, as it would; all is well and safe, so long as the Heart rests all upon God alone. Your Ladyship says, this worthy Person *fears his Zeal*, and *yet dreads the Abatement of it*. It would be better, not to indulge a Thought about *his own Zeal*, or to speak a Word of it to any Person. For if
it

it is godly Zeal, it is no more *his* than it is mine, nor comes any more from him, than it does from me; and therefore when he thinks, or speaks of it as *his*, or as something he would be glad to keep in its right State, it is giving Way to Delusion, both with regard to himself, and the Nature of true Zeal: For as the *Wind bloweth where it listeth*, so it is with Him, who is driven by true Zeal.

I do not wonder, that his Audience is so much affected, and increased, since he has preached up the Doctrine of Regeneration amongst them. All other Preaching passes away as a Tale that is told, and indeed is nothing better, till it enters into the Things within Man, brings him to a Sensibility of the State of his Heart, and its Want of God's Holy Spirit therein.

How far it may be right for him to comply with their Request of visiting, reading, and expounding the Scripture to them, I pretend not to say:—But only thus much, that it seems to be right to be in no Anxiety about it, or use any Reasoning, either to persuade himself to it, or from it, or to put himself under any *stated Rules* about it, but leave it to be done, as he finds himself inwardly stirred up to it, and able out of the Abundance of his Heart to perform it.

Ex-

Expounding the Scriptures, has a fine Sound, but I should rather advise such Persons, to read only in Love, and Simplicity of Heart, such Scriptures as need no Expounder, but their own Heart turned to God. Persons who are come to this inward Conviction, that they must live, and die, under the Power of Satan, and of fallen Nature, unless by a Fulness of Faith in Christ, they be born again from above, have nothing more to enquire about, where, or how Christ is to be found.

They have no other Use to make of the Scripture, but that of being refreshed, and delighted with such Passages, as turn, and stir up the Heart, to a Fulness of Faith, Love, and Resignation to the blessed Guidance, and Operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

Jan. 10, 1754.



L E T T E R VIII.

To the Same.

Madam,

✱✱✱ R. Wesley's Letter did not at all
✱ M ✱ disappoint me. I had no Expec-
✱✱✱ tation of seeing a better, either with
regard to the Substance, or to the
Stile, and Manner of it. If I knew of any
kind of Answer, that would do him any real
Good,

Good, I should advise it. But to answer it for the Good of any one else, seems to be quite needless. It does not admit of a serious Answer, because there is nothing substantial, or properly argumentative in it. And to answer it in the way of Ridicule, is what I cannot come into, being full as averse to make a Mock of him in a religious Garb, as to the doing the greatest bodily Injury to his Person. How far he has answered, or does answer any good Ends of Providence, or is an Instrument in the Hands of God, is a Matter I meddle not with; only wishing, that every Appearance of Good, every stirring of Zeal, under whatever Form it appears, whether in Knowledge, or Ignorance, in Wisdom, or Weakness, may be directed, and blessed by God, to the best Ends it is capable of.

As to myself, I seem to myself to have no other Part to Act, nor any Call to any Thing else, in this Hurry, and Struggle of Zeal against Zeal, in such a Variety of Forms, but only, and fully to assert the true Ground, and largely open all the Reasons, of that one inward Regeneration, which is equally the one Thing needful to every Sect, and the one Thing alone that can make every Sect, or Method, or outward Form, not hurtful to those that adhere to it.

For every outward Form, however specious or promising, will only help us to be
carnally

carnally minded, till it is in some degree known, to have no other, or better Nature, than that of the Shell, which helps us to the Kernel.

The Doctrines I have published, are in their best State with regard to the Reader, as they stand in my Books, and will be less useful to him, when they are drawn into Controversy. For this Reason, I can lend no Help to that.

This may perhaps seem to your Ladyship, as if I had too great an Opinion of what I had done.—And I believe, such a free Way of speaking sometimes in Conversation of my own Books, may have been suspected of smelling too much of Self-esteem.--But I can with Truth assure you, Madam, that when I speak of the *Fullness* and *Clearness* of my own Writings, I feel no other Sentiments of Self-sufficiency, than when I speak of the Goodness of my own Eyes. Nor do I know how to consider the one, more than the other, to be any Merit of my own; and therefore when any Man, great or little, contemns, reproaches, or asperges me, or my Books, as void of Sense, Truth, and Light, I feel no more inward Uneasiness, or think myself any more hurt, than if he had only told the World, that my Eyes were miserably bad, and I could scarce see to read, even with the best Spectacles: And so have no Desire controversially to defend the one, more than the other, but contentedly leave them both, to be their own Proof of what they are.

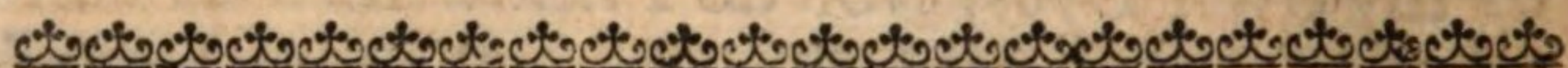
I was once a kind of Oracle with Mr. *Wesley*.

I never suspected any Thing bad of him, or ever discovered any Kind, or Degree of Falseness, or Hypocrisy in him.

But during all the Time of his Intimacy with me, I judged him to be much under the Power of his *own Spirit*, which seemed to have the Predominancy in every good Thing, or Way, that his Zeal carried him to.

It was owing to his Unwillingness, or Inability to give up his own Spirit, that he was forced into that false, and rash Censure which he published in Print, against the Mystics:—As *Enemies to good Works*, and even tending to *Atheism*. A Censure so false, and regardless of Right and Wrong, as hardly any Thing can exceed it; which is to be found in a Preface of his to a Book of Hymns.—But no more of this.

Feb. 16, 1756.



L E T T E R IX.

To the Same.

Madam,

✱✱✱ HE Passage in the Letter from a pious
✱✱✱ T ✱✱✱ and very excellent Clergyman, as you
✱✱✱ ✱✱✱ stile him, calls for no Regard, either
from your Ladyship, or me. More insignificant
Words cannot well be put together:—“I think,
“ says he, Mr. *Law* has gone *half a Bow Shot* too
“ far.” If I have shot so far beyond, or beside
the Truth, he should have shewn *where*, and
why,

why, and *how*. Without this, his Words are but a Random Shot at nothing. His Reason for this Censure, is still worse, *viz.* “ *because I have touched the Heart-String of all systematical Divinity.*” As grievous a Charge, as if he had said, that I had shook the very Foundation of every *Babel* in every Country. For not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish, or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

His next Reason is, “ *because it should not be touched without Skill from above.*”

If this Gentleman ever preaches from the Pulpit, concerning the Ways of God, and the Doctrines of Redemption, without Skill from above, all he says, will be a *whole Bow-Shot* beside the Matter.

If therefore, in touching this Point, I have touched that, which ought not to be touched without Skill from above, I have taken no bolder a Step, than He does, every Time he mounts the Pulpit, to give forth the Doctrines of Christ.

His third Reason is this, “ *I chuse in my present Ignorance, as touching the Necessity, and Virtue of an outward Attonement, to bow down before the awful Subject.*”

But in Truth, he should have said, I chuse to bow down before the awful *Heart String* of all Systematical Divinity, which resolves all the Attonement into an *infinite Wrath*, and *Vengeance*, raised in the Holy Deity itself, and which would not be appeased, or satisfied by any Thing else,

but the Sacrifice of an infinite Son of God. It is by reason of his Attachment to this Heart String, or rather his having so *constantly preached* according to it, that he cannot bear a Demonstration of the most glorious Truth, that either Heaven or Earth can proclaim, *viz.* that God from Eternity to Eternity, is mere, unchangeable, and ever-overflowing Love; and that nothing but this Infinity of never-ceasing, never-changing Love, gave the Birth, the Life, the Sufferings, the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, for the Salvation of all Mankind; because in the whole possible Nature of Things, nothing else but this *whole Process* of a God made Man, could have any Ability, to extinguish the Hell, and Wrath of fallen Nature, and give Man a second Birth of such a Life from above, as could for ever and ever, have Union and Communion with the unbeginning, never-ending, never-changing Trinity of Love.



L E T T E R X.

To Mr. J. T.

My dear worthy Friend,




 I much love and esteem, your


 Letter, though full of Complaints about the State of your Heart, was very much according to my Mind, and gives me
 great

great hopes, that God will carry on the good Work he has begun in you, and lead you by his holy Spirit, through all those Difficulties, under which you at present Labour.

The Desire that you have, to be better than you find yourself at present, is God's Call begun to be heard within you, and will make itself to be more heard within you, if you give but way to it, and reverence it as such; humbly believing that he that calls, will, and only can, help you to pay right and full Obedience to it.

As to the Advertifement in the public Papers, it deserved no Regard from you, or any one else. It must have come, either from a very ignorant and weak Friend, or from a very insignificant Enemy to the Writings of J. B. But be it as it will, it was not an Object of your Attention, nor could be of any Use to you.

But to come to your own State, You seem to yourself to be all *Infatuation and Stupidity*, because your Head, and your Heart are so contrary, the one delighting in heavenly Notions, the other governed by earthly Passions, and Pursuits. It is happy for you, that you know and acknowlege this : For only through this Truth, through the full and deep Perception of it, can you have any Entrance, or so much as the Beginning of an Entrance into the Liberty of the Children of God. God is in this Respect dealing with you, as he does with those,

whose Darknefs is to be changed into Light. Which can never be done, till you fully know
1. the real Badnefs of your own Heart, and
2. your utter Inability to deliver yourself from it, by any Sense, Power, or Activity of your own Mind.

And was you in a better State, as to your own thinking, the Matter would be worfe with you. For the Badnefs in your Heart, though you had no Sensibility of it, would still be *there*, and would only be concealed, to your much greater Hurt. For there it certainly is, whether it be feen and found, or not, and fooner or later, muft shew itself in its full Deformity, or the old Man will never die the Death which is due to him, and muft be undergone, before the New Man in Chrift can be formed in us.

All that you complain of in your Heart is common to Man, as Man. There is no Heart that is without it. And this is the one Ground, why every Man, as fuch, however different in Temper, Complexion, or natural Endowments from others, has one and the same full Reason, and absolute Neceffity, of being born again from above.

Flesh and Blood, and the Spirit of this World, govern every Spring in the Heart of the natural Man. And therefore you can never enough adore that Ray of divine Light, which breaking in upon your Darknefs, has discovered this to
be

be the State of your Heart, and raised only those faint Wishes that you feel to be delivered from it.

For faint as they are, they have their Degree of Goodness in them, and as certainly proceed *solely* from the Goodness of God *working* in your Soul, as the first Dawning of the Morning, is solely from, and wrought by the same Sun, which helps us to the Noon-day Light. Firmly, therefore, believe this, as a certain Truth, that the present Sensibility of your Incapacity for Goodness, is to be cherished as a *heavenly Seed* of Life, as the blessed Work of God in your Soul.

Could you like any Thing in your own Heart, or so much as fancy any Good to be in it, or believe that you had any Power of your own to embrace and follow Truth, this comfortable Opinion, so far as it goes, would be your *turning away* from God and all Goodness, and building iron Walls of Separation betwixt God and your Soul.

For Conversion to God, only then begins to be in *Truth*, and *Reality*, when we see nothing that can give us the least Degree of Faith, of Hope, of Trust, or Comfort in any Thing, that we are of ourselves.

To see Vanity of Vanities in all outward Things, to loath and abhor certain Sins, is indeed *something*, but yet as nothing, in comparison of seeing and believing the Vanity of Vanities within us, and ourselves as utterly un-

able to take one single Step in true Goodness, as to add one Cubit to our Stature.

Under this Conviction, the Gate of Life is opened to us. And therefore it is, that all the preparatory Parts of Religion, all the various Proceedings of God either over our *inward*, or *outward* State, setting up, and pulling down, giving, and taking away, Light, and Darkeness, Comfort, and Distress, as independently of us, as he makes the Rain to descend, and the Winds to blow, are all of them for this only End, to bring us to this Conviction, that all that can be called *Life, Good, and Happiness*, is to come solely from God, and not the smallest Spark of it from ourselves. When Man was first created, all the Good that he had in him was from God alone. N. B. This must be the State of Man for ever.— From the Beginning of Time through all Eternity, the Creature can have no Goodness, but that which God creates in it.

Our first created Goodness is lost, because our first Father departed from a full, absolute Dependence upon God. For a full, continual, unwavering Dependence upon God, is *that alone* which keeps God in the Creature, and the Creature in God.

Our lost Goodness can never come again, or be found in us, till by a Power from Christ living in us, we are brought out of ourselves, and all selfish Trusts, into that full and blessed Dependence upon God, in which our first Father should have lived. What

What Room now, my dear Friend, for Complaint at the Sight, Sense, and Feeling of your Inability to make yourself better than you are? Did you want *this Sense*, every Part of your Religion would only have the Nature and Vanity of Idolatry. For you cannot come unto God, you cannot believe in him, you cannot worship him in Spirit and Truth, till he is regarded as the *only Giver*, and you yourself as nothing else but the Receiver of every heavenly Good, that can possibly come to life in you.

Can it trouble you, that it was God that made you, and not you yourself? Yet this would be as reasonable, as to be troubled that you cannot make heavenly Affection, or divine Powers to spring up, and abide in your Soul.

God must for ever be God alone; Heaven, and the heavenly Nature are his, and must for ever and ever be received only from him, and for ever and ever be only preserved, by an entire Dependance upon, and Trust in him. Now as all the Religion of fallen Man, fallen from God into himself, and the Spirit of this World, has no other End, but to bring us back to an *entire Dependance* upon God; so we may justly say, Blessed is that Light, happy is that Conviction, which brings us into a full and settled Despair, of ever having the least Good from ourselves.

Then are we truly brought, and laid at the Gate of Mercy: At which Gate, no Soul ever did, or can lay in vain, A

A broken and contrite Heart God will not despise. That is, God will not, God cannot pass by, overlook, or disregard it. But the Heart is then only broken and contrite, when all its strong Holds are broken down, all false Coverings taken off, and it sees, with inwardly opened Eyes, every Thing to be bad, false, and rotten, that does, or can proceed from it as its own.

But you will perhaps say, that *your Conviction* is only an uneasy Sensibility of your own State, and has not the Goodness of a broken and contrite Heart in it.

Let it be so, yet it is rightly in order to it, and it can only begin, as it begins at present in you. Your Conviction is certainly not full and perfect; for if it was, you would not complain, or grieve at Inability to help or mend yourself, but would patiently expect, and only look for Help from God alone.

But whatever is wanting in your Conviction, be it what it will, it cannot be added by yourself, nor come any other Way, than as the highest Degree of the divine Life can come into it.

Know therefore your Want of this, as of all other Goodness. But know also at the same Time, that it cannot be had through your own *willing* and *running*, but through God that sheweth Mercy; that is to say, through God who giveth us Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ
is

is the *one only Mercy* of God to all the fallen World.

Now if all the Mercy of God is only to be found in Christ Jesus, if he alone can save us from our Sins; if he alone has Power to heal all our Infirmities, and restore original Righteousness, what Room for any other Pains, Labour, or Enquiry, but *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found.

It matters not what our Evils are, Deadness, Blindness, Infatuation, Hardness of Heart, Covetousness, Wrath, Pride, and Ambition, &c. our Remedy is always one and the same, always at hand, always certain and infallible. Seven Devils are as easily cast out by Christ as one. He came into the World, not to save from this, or that Disorder, but to destroy all the Power and Works of the Devil in Man.

If you ask *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found? I answer, in your Heart, and by your Heart, and no where else, nor by any Thing else.

But you will perhaps say, it is your very Heart that keeps you a Stranger to Christ, and him to you, because your Heart is all bad, as unholy as a Den of Thieves.

I answer, that the finding this to be the State of your Heart, is the real finding of Christ in it.

For nothing else but Christ can reveal, and make manifest the Sin and Evil in you. And
he

he that *Discovers*, is the same Christ that takes away Sin. So that, as soon as complaining Guilt, sets itself before you, and will be seen, you may be assured, that Christ is in you of a Truth.

For Christ must first come as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. It is the infallible Proof of his holy Presence within you.

Hear him, reverence him, submit to him as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. Own his Power and Presence in the Feeling of your Guilt, and then he that wounded, will heal, he that found out the Sin, will take it away, and he who shewed you your *Den of Thieves*, will turn it into a holy Temple of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And now, Sir, you may see, that your Doubt and Enquiry of me, whether your Will was *really free, or not*, was groundless.

You have no Freedom, or Power of Will, to assume any holy Temper, or take hold of such Degrees of Goodness, as you have a Mind to have. For nothing is, or ever can be goodness in you, but the one *Life, Light, and Spirit* of Christ, revealed, formed, and begotten in your Soul. Christ in us, is our only Goodness, as Christ in us, is our Hope of Glory. But Christ in us is the pure free Gift of God to us.

But you have a true and full Freedom of Will and Choice, either to *leave*, and *give up* your helpless Self, to the Operation of God on
your

your Soul, or to *rely* npon your own *rational* Industry, and *natural* Strength of Mind. This is the Truth of the Freedom of your Will, in your first setting out, which is a Freedom that no Man wants, or can want so long as he is in the Body. And every unregenerate Man has this Freedom.

If therefore you have not that which you want to have of God, or are not that which you ought to be in Christ Jesus, it is not because you have no free Power of leaving yourself in the Hands, and under the Operation of God, but because the same Freedom of your Will, seeks for Help where it cannot be had, namely, in some Strength and Activity of your own Faculties.

Of this Freedom of Will it is said, *According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee*; that is to say, according as thou leavest and trustest thyself to God, so will his Operation be in thee.

This is the real, great magic Power of the first turning of the Will; of which it is truly said, that it *always hath* that which it willeth, and can have nothing else.

When this Freedom of the Will wholly leaves itself to God, saying, *not mine, but thy Will be done*, then it hath that, which it willeth. The Will of God is done in it. It is in God. It hath divine Power. It worketh with God, and by God, and comes
at

at length to be *that Faith*, which can remove Mountains; and nothing is too hard for it.

And thus it is, that every unregenerate Son of *Adam* hath Life and Death in his *own Choice*, not by any natural Power of taking which he will, but by a full Freedom, either of *leaving*, and trusting himself to the *redeeming Operation* of God, which is eternal Life, or of acting according to his *own Will and Power* in Flesh and Blood, which is eternal Death.

And now, my dear Friend, let me tell you, that as here lies all the true and real Freedom, which cannot be taken from you, so in the constant Exercise of this Freedom, that is, in a continual *leaving* yourself to, and *depending* upon the Operation of God in your Soul, lies all your Road to Heaven. No divine Virtue can be had any other Way.

All the Excellency and Power of Faith, Hope, Love, Patience, and Resignation, &c. which are the true and only Graces of the spiritual Life, have no other Root or Ground, but this *free, full leaving* of yourself to God, and are only so many different Expressions of your willing nothing, seeking nothing, trusting to nothing, but the *life-giving Power* of his holy Presence in your Soul.

To sum up all in a Word. Wait patiently, trust humbly, depend only upon, seek solely to a God of Light and Love, of Mercy and Goodness, of Glory and Majesty, ever dwelling in
the

the inmost Depth and Spirit of your Soul. There you have all the secret, hidden, invifible Upholder of all the Creation, whose bleffed Operation will always be found by a humble, faithful, loving, calm, patient Introverfion of your Heart to him, who has his hidden Heaven within you, and which will open itfelf to you, as foon as your Heart is *left* wholly to his eternal ever-fpeaking WORD, and ever fanchtifying Spirit within you.

Beware of all Eagernefs and Activity of your own natural Spirit and Temper. Run not in any hafty Ways of your own. Be patient under the Senfe of your own Vanity and Weaknefs; and patiently wait for God to do his own Work, and in his own Way. For you can go no fafter, than a full Dependance upon God can carry you.

You will perhaps fay, Am I then to be idle, and do nothing towards the Salvation of my Soul? No, you muft by no means be idle, but earneftly diligent, according to your Measure, in all good Works, which the Law and the Gospel direct you to, both with Regard to your Self, and other People.

Outward good Works to other People, may be juftly confidered as God's Errand on which you are fent, and therefore to be done faithfully, according to the Will, and in obedience to him that fent you.

But nothing that you do, or praftife as a Good to your felf, and other People, is in its
pro-

proper State, grows from its right Root, or reaches its true End, till you look for no willing, nor depend upon any *doing* that which is good, but by Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God, living in you. I caution you only against all Eagerneſs and Activity of your own Spirit, ſo far as it leads you to ſeek, and truſt to ſomething that is not God, and Chriſt within you.

I recommend to you Stilneſs, Calmneſs, Patience, &c. not to make you lifeleſs, and indifferent about good Works, or indeed with any Regard to them, but ſolely with regard to your *Faith*, that it may have its proper Soil to grow in, and becauſe all Eagerneſs, Reſtleſſneſs, Haſte, and Impatience, either with regard to God, or ourſelves, are not only great Hindrances, but real Defects of our Faith and Dependance upon God.

Laſtly, be courageous then, and full of Hope, not by looking at any Strength of your own, or fancying that you *now know* how to be wiſer in *your ſelf*, than you have hitherto been; no, this will only help you to find more and more Defects of Weakneſs in your ſelf; but be courageous in Faith, and Hope, and Dependance upon God. And be aſſured, that the one infallible Way to all that is good, is never to be weary in waiting, truſting, and depending upon God manifeſted in Chriſt Jeſus.

I am your hearty Friend

March 20, 1756.

and Well-Wiſher.

L E T-



L E T T E R X I.

To a Person burdened with inward and
outward Troubles.

Worthy Sir,

MY Heart embraces you, with all the Tenderneſs and Affection of Chriſtian Love; and I earneſtly beg of God, to make me a Meſſenger of *his Peace* to your Soul.

You seem to apprehend, I may be much surprised at the Account you have given of yourself; but I am neither surprised, nor offended at it; I neither condemn, nor lament your Estate, but shall endeavour to shew you, how soon it may be made a Blessing and Happiness to you. In order to which, I shall not enter into a Consideration of the different Kinds of Trouble you have set forth at large. I think it better to lay before you the one true Ground and Root, from whence all the Evil and Disorders of Human Life have sprung. This will make it easy for you to see, what that is, which must, and only can, be the full Remedy and Relief for all of them,

L how

how different soever, either in Kind, or Degree.

The Scripture has assured us, that God made Man in *his own Image and Likeness*; a sufficient Proof, that Man, in his first State, as he came forth from God, must have been absolutely free from all Vanity, Want, or Distress of any Kind, from any Thing either within, or without him.—It would be quite absurd and blasphemous, to suppose, that a Creature beginning to exist in the Image and Likeness of God, should have Vanity of Life, or Vexation of Spirit: A God-like Perfection of Nature, and a painful, distressed Nature, stand in the utmost Contrariety to one another.

Again, the Scripture has assured us, *that Man that is born of a Woman, bath but a short Time to live, and is full of Misery*: Therefore Man now is not that Creature that he was by his Creation. The first divine and God-like Nature of *Adam*, which was to have been immortally Holy in Union with God, is lost; and instead of it, a poor Mortal of earthly Flesh and Blood, born like a wild Ass's Colt, of a short Life, and full of Misery, is through a vain Pilgrimage, to end in Dust and Ashes. Therefore, let every Evil, whether inward, or outward, only teach you this Truth, that Man has infallibly lost his first divine Life in God; and that no possible
Comfort

Comfort, or Deliverance is to be expected, but only in this one Thing, that though Man had lost his God, yet God is become Man, that Man may be again alive in God, as at the first. For all the Misery and Distress of human Nature, whether of Body or Mind, is wholly owing to this *one Cause*, that *God is not in Man*, nor *Man in God*, as the State of his Nature requires: It is, because Man has lost that *first Life* of God in his Soul, in and for which he was created. He lost this Light, and Spirit, and Life of God, by turning his Will, Imagination, and Desire, into a tasting and Sensibility of the Good and Evil of this earthly bestial World.

Now here are two Things raised up in Man, instead of the *Life of God*: *First, Self*, or *Selfishness*, brought forth by his chusing to have a Wisdom of *his own*, contrary to the Will and Instruction of his Creator. *Secondly*, an earthly, bestial, mortal Life and Body, brought forth by his eating that Food, which was Poison to his paradisaical Nature. Both these must therefore be removed; that is, a Man must first totally die to *Self*, and all earthly Desires, Views, and Intentions, before he can be again in God, as his Nature and first Creation requires.

But now if this be a certain and immutable Truth, that Man, so long as he is a *selfish, earthly-minded* Creature, must be deprived of

his true Life, the *Life* of God, the *Spirit of Heaven* in his Soul ; then how is the Face of Things changed ! For then, what Life is so much to be dreaded, as a Life of worldly Ease and Prosperity ? What a Misery, nay what a Curse, is there in every Thing that gratifies and nourishes our Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking ? On the other Hand, what Happiness is there in all inward and outward Troubles and Vexations, when they force us to feel and know the Hell that is hidden within us, and the Vanity of every Thing without us, when they turn all our Self-love into Self-abhorrence, and force us to call upon God to save us from Ourselves, to give us a new Life, new Light, and new Spirit in *Christ Jesus*.

“ O Happy Famine,” might the poor Prodigal have well said, “ which, by reducing
“ me to the Necessity of asking to eat Husks
“ with Swine, *brought me to myself*, and
“ caused my Return to my first Happiness in
“ my Father’s House.”

Now, I will suppose your distressed State to be as you represent it ; inwardly, Darkness, Heaviness, and Confusion of Thoughts and Passions ; outwardly, ill Usage from Friends, Relations, and all the World ; unable to strike up the least Spark of Light or Comfort, by any Thought or Reasoning of your own.

O happy

O happy Famine, which leaves you not so much as the Husk of one human Comfort to feed upon! For this is the Time and Place for all that *Good* and *Life* and *Salvation* to happen to you, which happened to the prodigal Son. Your Way is as short, and your Success as certain as his was: You have no more to do than he had; you need not call out for Books, or Methods of Devotion; for, in your present State, much reading, and borrowed Prayers, are not your best Method: All that you are to offer to God, all that is to help you to find him to be your Saviour and Redeemer, is best taught and expressed by the distressed State of your Heart.

Only let your present and past Distress make you feel and acknowledge this twofold great Truth: *First*, That in and of yourself, you are nothing but Darkness, Vanity, and Misery; *Secondly*, that of yourself, you can no more help yourself to Light and Comfort, than you can create an Angel. People at all Times can seem to assent to these two Truths; but then it is an Assent that has no Depth or Reality, and so is of little or no Use: But your Condition has opened your Heart for a deep and full Conviction of these Truths. Now give Way, I beseech you, to this Conviction, and hold these two Truths, in the *same* Degree of Certainty as you know two and two to be four, and then you are with

the Prodigal *come to yourself*, and above HALF YOUR WORK IS DONE.

Being now in the full Possession of these two Truths, feeling them in the same Degree of Certainty, as you feel your own Existence, you are, under this Sensibility, to give up yourself absolutely and entirely to God in Christ Jesus, as into the Hands of infinite *Love*; firmly believing this *great* and infallible Truth, That God has no Will towards you, but that of *infinite Love*, and infinite Desire to make you a Partaker of his divine Nature; and that it is as *absolutely impossible* for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to refuse all that *Good* and *Life* and *Salvation* which you want, as it is for you to take it by your own Power.

O drink deep of *this Cup*! for the precious Water of eternal Life is in it. Turn unto God with *this Faith*; cast yourself into this *Abyss of Love*; and then you will be in that State the Prodigal was in, when he said, *I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son*; and all that will be fulfilled in you, which is related of him.

Make this, therefore, the twofold Exercise of your Heart: *Now*, bowing yourself down before God, in the deepest Sense and Acknowledgment of your own Nothingness
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and Vileness; *then*, looking up unto God in Faith and love, consider him as always extending the Arms of his Mercy towards you, and full of an infinite Desire to *dwell in you*, as he dwells in Angels in Heaven. Content yourself with this inward and simple Exercise of your Heart, for a while; and seek, or like nothing in any Book, but that which nourishes and strengthens this State of your Heart.

Come unto me, says the holy Jesus, *all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*. Here is more for you to live upon, more Light for your Mind, more of Unction for your Heart, than in Volumes of human Instruction. Pick up the Words of the holy Jesus, and beg of him to be the *Light and Life* of your Soul: Love the Sound of his Name; for Jesus is the *Love*, the *Sweetness*, the *compassionate Goodness*, of the *Deity* itself; which became Man, that so Men might have Power to become the Sons of God. Love and pity and wish well to every Soul in the World; *dwell in Love*, and then you *dwell in God*; hate nothing but the Evil that stirs in your own Heart.

Teach your Heart this Prayer, till your Heart continually saith, though not with outward Words; “ O holy Jesus: meek Lamb
“ of God! Bread that came down from
“ Heaven! Light and Life of all holy Souls!
“ help me to a true and living Faith in thee.

“ O do thou open thyself *within me*, with all
“ thy holy Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and In-
“ clinations, that I may be born again of
“ thee, in thee a new Creature, quickened
“ and revived, led and governed by thy holy
“ Spirit.”

Prayer so practised, becomes the *Life of the Soul*, and the true *Food of Eternity*. Keep in this State of Application to God ; and then you will infallibly find it to be the true Way of rising out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity.

Do not expect, or look, for the same Degrees of sensible Fervour.—The Matter lies not there.—Nature will have its Share ; but the Ups and Downs of that are to be overlooked. Whilst your Will-Spirit is good, and set right, the Changes of creaturely Fervour lessen not your Union with God. It is the Abyfs of the Heart, an unfathomable Depth of Eternity within us, as much above sensible Fervour, as Heaven is above Earth ; it is *this* that works our Way to God, and unites with Heaven. This Abyfs of the Heart, is the divine Nature and Power within us, which never calls upon God in vain ; but whether helped or deserted by bodily Fervour, penetrates through all outward Nature, as easily and effectually as our Thoughts can leave our Bodies, and reach into the Regions of Eternity.

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The Poverty of our fallen Nature, the depraved Workings of Flesh and Blood, the corrupt Tempers of our polluted Birth in this World, do us no hurt, so long as the *Spirit of Prayer* works contrary to them, and longs for the first Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven. All our natural Evil ceases to be our *own Evil*, as soon as our Will-Spirit turns from it ; it then changes its Nature, loses all its Poison and Death, and only becomes our *holy Cross*, on which we happily die from Self and this World into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Would you have done with Error, Scruple, and Delusion? Consider the *Deity* to be the greatest Love, the greatest Meekness, the greatest Sweetness, the *eternal unchangeable Will to be a Good and Blessing to every Creature* ; and that all the Misery, Darkness, and Death of fallen Angels and fallen Men, consist in their having lost their *Likeness to this Divine Nature*. Consider yourself, and all the fallen World, as having nothing to seek or wish for, but by the *Spirit of Prayer* to draw into the Life of your Soul, Rays and Sparks of this divine, meek, loving, tender Nature of God. Consider the holy Jesus as the *Gift of God* to your Soul, to begin and finish the Birth of God and Heaven within you, in Spight of every inward or outward Enemy. These three infallible Truths, heartily embraced, and made the Nourishment of
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your Soul, shorten and secure the Way to Heaven, and leave no Room for Error, Scruple, or Delusion.

Expect no Life, Light, Strength, or Comfort, but from the Spirit of God, dwelling and manifesting his own Goodness in your Soul. The best of Men, and the best of Books, can only do you good, so far as they turn you from themselves, and every human Thing, to seek, and have, and receive every Kind of Good from God alone; not a distant, or an absent God, but a God living, moving, and always working in the Spirit and Heart of your Soul.

They never find God, who seek for him by Reasoning and Speculation; for since God is the highest Spirit, and the highest Life, nothing but a like Spirit, and a like Life, can unite with him, find or feel, or know any Thing of him. Hence it is, that Faith, and Hope, and Love, turned towards God, are the only possible, and also infallible Means of obtaining a true and living Knowledge of him. And the Reason is plain, it is because by these *Holy Tempers*, which are the Workings of *Spirit* and *Life* within us, we seek the God of Life *where he is*, we call upon him with his *own Voice*, we draw near to him by *his own Spirit*; for nothing can breathe forth Faith, and Love, and Hope to God, but that Spirit and Life which is of God, and which therefore
through

through Flesh and Blood thus presses towards him, and readily unites with him.

There is not a more infallible Truth in the World than this, *that neither Reasoning nor Learning can ever introduce a Spark of Heaven into our Souls*: But if this be so, then you have nothing to seek, nor any Thing to fear, from Reason. *Life and Death* are the Things in Question: They are neither of them the Growth of Reasoning or Learning, but each of them is a State of the Soul, and only thus differ, *Death is the Want, and Life the Enjoyment of it's highest Good*. Reason, therefore, and Learning, have no Power here; but only by their vain Activity to keep the Soul insensible of that Life and Death, one of which is always growing up in it, according as the Will and Desire of the Heart worketh. Add Reason to a Vegetable, and you add nothing to its Life or Death. Its Life and Fruitfulness lieth in the Soundness of its Root, the Goodness of the Soil, and the Riches it derives from Air and Light. Heaven and Hell grow thus in the Soul of every Man: His Heart is his Root; if that is turned from all Evil, it is then like the Plant in a good Soil; when it hungers and thirsts after the the divine Life, it then infallibly draws the Light and Spirit of God into it, which are infinitely more ready and willing to live and fructify in the Soul, than Light and Air to enter into the

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the Plant, that hungers after them. For the Soul hath its Breath, and Being, and Life, for no other End, but that the TRIUNE God may manifest the Riches and Powers of his own Life in it.

Thus *Hunger* is all, and in all Worlds, every Thing lives in it, and by it; nothing else eats, or partakes of Life; and every Thing eats according to its own Hunger. Every Thing hungers after its own Mother, that is, every Thing has a natural magnetick Tendency to partake of that from which it had its Being, and can only find its Rest in that from whence it came. —Dead as well as living Things bear Witness to this Truth: The Stones fall to the Earth, the Sparks fly upwards, for this only Reason, because every Thing must tend towards that from whence it came.

Were not Angels and the Souls of Men breathed forth from God, as so many real Offsprings of the Divine Nature, it would be as impossible for them to have any Desire of God, as for Stones to go upwards, and the Flame downwards. Thus you may see, and feel, that the *Spirit of Prayer* not only proves that you came from God, but is your certain Way of returning to Him.

When, therefore, it is the one ruling, never ceasing Desire of our Hearts, that God may be the *Beginning* and *End*, the *Reason* and *Motive*, the *Rule* and *Measure*, of our doing,

doing, or not doing, from Morning to Night ; then every where, whether speaking or silent, whether inwardly or outwardly employed, we are equally offered up to the eternal Spirit, have our Life in Him and from Him, and are united to Him, by that *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Comfort, the Support, the Strength and Security of the Soul, travelling by the Help of God, through the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. For this *Spirit of Prayer*, let us willingly give up all that we inherit from our fallen Father, to be all *Hunger* and *Thirst* after God ; and to have no Thought or Care, but how to be wholly his devoted Instruments ; every where, and in every Thing, his adoring, joyful, and thankful Servants. Have your Eyes shut, and Ears stopped to every Thing, that is not a Step in that Ladder that reaches from Earth to Heaven.

Reading is good, Hearing is good, Conversation and Meditation are good ; but then they are only good at Times and Occasions, in a certain Degree ; and must be used and governed, with such Caution, as we eat and drink, and refresh ourselves, or they will bring forth in us the Fruits of Intemperance. But the *Spirit of Prayer* is for all Times, and all Occasions ; it is a Lamp that is to be always burning, a Light to be ever shining ; every Thing calls for it, every Thing is to be done

done in it, and governed by it ; because it is, and means, and wills nothing else, but the whole Totality of the Soul, not doing this or that, but wholly, incessantly given up to God, to be *where*, and *what*, and *how* he pleases.

This State of *absolute Resignation*, *naked Faith*, and *pure Love of God*, is the highest Perfection, and most purified Life of those, who are born again from above, and through the Divine Power become Sons of God : And it is neither more nor less, than what our blessed Redeemer has called, and qualified us to long and aspire after, in these Words : *Thy Kingdom come ; thy Will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* It is to be sought for in the Simplicity of a little Child, without being captivated with any mysterious Depths or Heights of Speculation ; without coveting any Knowledge, or wanting to see any Ground of Nature, Grace, or Creature, but so far as it brings us nearer to God, forces us to forget and renounce every Thing for Him ; to do every Thing in Him, with Him, and for Him ; and to give every breathing, moving, stirring, Intention, and Desire of our Heart, Soul, Spirit, and Life to Him.

Let every Creature have your *Love*. *Love* with its Fruits of *Meekness*, *Patience*, and *Humility*, is all that we can wish for to ourselves, and our fellow Creatures ; for this is
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to live in God, united to him, both for Time and Eternity.

To desire to communicate Good to every Creature, in the Degree we can, and it is capable of receiving from us, is a Divine Temper; for thus God stands unchangeably disposed towards the whole Creation: But let me add my Request, as you value the Peace which God has brought forth by his Holy Spirit in you, as you desire to be continually taught by an Unction from above, that you would on no Account enter into any Dispute with any one about the Truths of Salvation; but give them every Help, but that of debating with them; for no Man has Fitness for the Light of the Gospel, till he finds an Hunger and Thirst, and Want of something better, than that which he has and is by Nature. Yet we ought not to check our Inclinations to help others in every Way we can. Only do what you do, as a Work of God; and then, whatever may be the Event, you will have Reason to be content with the Success that God gives it. *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*; may be enough for you, as well as it was for our blessed Lord.

The next Thing that belongs to us, and which is also Godlike, is a true unfeigned Patience, and Meekness, shewing every Kind of Good-Will and tender Affection towards those that turn a deaf Ear to us; looking
upon

upon it to be full as contrary to God's Method, and the good State of our own Heart, to dispute with any one in contentious Words, as to fight with him for the Truths of Salvation.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest, saith our blessed Lord. He called none else, because no one else hath Ears to hear, or a Heart to receive the Truths of Redemption.

Every Man is a vain Disputer, till such Time as something has disturbed his State, and awakened in him a Sensibility of his own evil and miserable Nature. We are all of us afraid both of inward and outward Distress; and yet, till Distress comes, our Life is but a Dream, and we have no awakened Sensibility of our own true State.

We are apt to consider Parts and Abilities, as the proper Qualifications for the Reception of divine Truths; and wonder that a Man of a fine Understanding should not immediately embrace just and solid Doctrines: But the Matter is quite otherwise. Had Man kept Possession of his first rich and glorious State, there had been no Foundation for the Gospel Redemption; and the Doctrine of the Cross, ~~man~~ have appeared quite unreasonable to be pressed upon him: And therefore says our Lord, *To the Poor the Gospel is preached.* It is solely to them, and none else: That is, to
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poor fallen Man, that has lost all the true natural Riches and Greatness of his first Divine Life; to him is the Gospel preached. But if a Man knows and feels nothing of this Poverty of his Nature, he is not that Person to whom the Gospel belongs: It has no more Suitableness to his State, than it had to Man unfallen: And then the greater his Parts and Abilities are, the better is he qualified to shew the Folly of every Doctrine of that Salvation, of which he has no want.

Such a Man, though he may be of an humane, ingenuous, generous and frank Nature, of lively Parts and much candour, is nevertheless entirely ignorant of the Depth of the Heart of Man, and the Necessities of Human Nature. As yet (though he knows it not) he is only at Play and Pastime, pleasing himself with supposed deep Enquiries after strict Truth, whilst he is only sporting himself with lively, wandring Images of This and That, just as they happen to start up in his mind. Could but he see himself in the State of the poor distressed prodigal Son, and find that himself is the very Person there recorded, he would then, but not till then, see the Fitness of that Redemption, which is offered him by the Mercy of God in CHRIST JESUS. But such an one, alas! is rich; he is sound; Light is in his own Power, Goodness is in his own Possession: He feels no Distress or

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Darkness ; but has a *Crucible* of *Reason* and *Judgment*, that on every Occasion separates Gold from Dross : And, therefore, he must be left to himself, to his own *Elysium*, till something more than Argument and Disputation awakens him out of these golden Dreams.

Let us beware also of the religious Pharisee, who raves against *spiritual Religion*, because it touches the very *Heart-string* of all *systematical Divinity*, and shakes the very *Foundation* of every B A B E L in every Country ; for not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

All Preachers of the true spiritual Mystery of the Gospel, of a Birth, Light and Life from above, in and by JESUS CHRIST (which are the Mystic Writers of every Age) ever were, and will be, treated by the reigning fashionable Orthodoxy, as Enemies to the outward Gospel, and its Services, just as the Prophets of God (who were the Mystic Preachers of the *Jewish Dispensation*) were by the then reigning Orthodoxy, condemned and despised, for calling People to a spiritual Meaning of the dead Letter, to a Holiness infinitely greater than that of their outward Sacrifices, Types, and Ceremonies.

Whoever he is that has any Situation of his own to defend, be it that of a celebrated Preacher,

Preacher, a Champion for received Orthodoxy, a Head, a Leader, or Follower of any Sect, or Party, or particular Method ; or that seems, both in his own Eyes, and in the Eyes of others, to have made himself significant in any kind of religious Distinction ; every such Person, sooner or later, will find, that he has much of that very same to give up, which hindered the zealous, and eminently religious Pharisee from converting to CHRIST, in the Spirit of a little Child.

Nor doth it help the Matter, that such an one abounds with Piety and Excellency ; for *St Paul* was governed by a Spirit of great Piety, great Excellency, and Zeal for God. He says of himself, that when he was persecuting the Disciples of Christ, he *lived in all good Conscience, as touching the Law blameless, and according to the straitest Sect of the Jewish Religion* : For the Pharisees, though many of them had all that Hypocrisy and Rottenness which Christ laid to their Charge, yet as a Sect, they were an Order of most confessed and resplendent Sanctity ; and yet the more earnest and upright they were in this kind of Zeal for Goodness, the more earnestly they opposed and condemned the heavenly Mystery of a *new Life* from CHRIST, as appears from *St Paul*.

This Sect of the Pharisees did not cease with the *Jewish Church* ; it only lost its old
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Name; it is still in being, and springs now in the same Manner from the Gospel, as it did then from the Law: It has the same Place, lives the same Life, does the same Work, minds the same Things, has the same Goodness at Heart, has the same religious Honour, and claim to Piety, in the Christian, as it had in the *Jewish* Church; and as much mistakes the Depths of the Mystery of the Gospel, as that Sect mistook the Mystery signified by the Letter of the Law and the Prophets.

It would be easy to shew in several Instances, how the Leaven of that Sect works amongst us, just as it did amongst them. *Have any of the Rulers believed on Him?* was the orthodox Question of the antient Pharisees. Now we Christians readily and willingly condemn the Weakness and Folly of that Question; and yet who does not see, that, for the most Part, both Priest and People, in every Christian Country, live and govern themselves by the Folly and Weakness of the very same Spirit which put that Question: For when God, as He has always done from the Beginning of the World, raises up private and illiterate Persons, full of Light and Wisdom from above, so as to be able to discover all the Workings of the Mystery of Iniquity, and to open the Ground, and Truth, and absolute Necessity of such an inward Spirit

Spirit and Life of CHRIST revealed in us, as Time, carnal Wisdom, and worldly Policy have departed from; when all this is done, by the weakest Instruments of God, in such a Simplicity and Fulness of Demonstration, as may be justly deemed a Miracle; do not Clergy and Laity get rid of it all, though ever so unanswerable, merely by the Strength of the Pharisees good old Question, saying with them, “ *Have any of the Rulers believed and* “ taught these Things? Hath the Church in “ Council or Convocation? Hath *Calvin,* “ *Luther, Zuinglius,* or any of our renowned “ System-makers, ever taught or asserted “ these matters?”

But hear what our blessed Lord saith, of the Place, the Power, and Origin of Truth: He refers us not to the current Doctrines of the Times, or to the Systems of men, but to his own Name, his own Nature, his own Divinity hidden in us: *My Sheep,* says he, *bear my Voice.* Here the whole Matter is decisively determined, both where Truth is, and who they are that can have any Knowledge of it.

HEAVENLY Truth is no where spoke but by the Voice of CHRIST, nor heard but by a Power of CHRIST living in the Hearer. As He is the eternal only Word of God, that speaks forth all the Wisdom, and Wonders of God; so He alone is the Word, that

speaks forth all the Life, Wisdom, and Goodness, that is or can be in any Creature ; it can have none but what it has in him and from him : This is the one unchangeable Boundary of Truth, Goodness, and every Perfection of Men on Earth, or Angels in Heaven.

Literary Learning, from the Beginning to the End of Time, will have no more of Heavenly Wisdom, nor any less of Worldly Foolishness in it, at one Time than at another ; its Nature is one and the same through all Ages ; what it was in the *Jew* and the Heathen, that same it is in the Christian. Its Name, as well as Nature, is unalterable, viz. *Foolishness with God*.

I shall add no more, but the two or three following Words.

I. Receive every inward and outward Trouble, every Disappointment, Pain, Uneasiness, Temptation, Darkeness, and Desolation, with both thy Hands, as a true Opportunity and blessed Occasion of *dying to Self*, and entering into a fuller Fellowship with thy Self-denying, suffering Saviour.

II. Look at no inward or outward Trouble in any *other View* ; reject every other Thought about it ; and then every Kind of Trial and Distress will become the blessed Day of thy Prosperity.

III. Be afraid of seeking or finding Comfort in any Thing, but God alone : For that
which

which gives thee Comfort, takes so much of thy Heart from God. “ Quid est Cor purum? cui ex toto, & pure sufficit solus Deus, cui nihil sapit, quod nihil delectat, nisi Deus.” *That is,* What constitutes a pure Heart? One to which God alone is totally, and purely sufficient; to which nothing relishes, or gives Delight, but God alone.

IV. That State is best, which exerciseth the highest Faith in, and fullest Resignation to God.

V. What is it you want and seek, but that God *may be all in all in you*? But how can this be, unless all creaturely Good and Evil become as nothing in you, or to you?

“ Oh Anima mea, abstrahe te ab Omnibus. Quid tibi cum mutabilibus Creaturis? Solum Sponsum tuum, qui omnium est Author Creaturarum, expectans, hoc age, ut Cor tuum ille liberum & expeditum semper inveniat, quoties illi ad ipsum venire placuerit.” *That is,* O my Soul! abstract thyself from every Thing. What hast thou to do with changeable Creatures? Waiting and expecting thy Bridegroom, who is the Author of all Creatures, let it be thy sole Concern, that he may find thy Heart free and disengaged, as often as it shall please him to visit thee.

Be assured of this, that sooner or later, we must be brought to this Conviction, That every Thing in ourselves by Nature is Evil, and must be entirely given up ; and that Nothing that is creaturely, can make us better than we are by Nature. Happy, therefore, and blessed are all those inward or outward Troubles, that hasten this Conviction in us ; that with the whole Strength of our Souls, we may be driven to seek ALL from and in God, without the least Thought, Hope, or Contrivance after any other Relief : Then it is, that we are made truly Partakers of the Cross of CHRIST ; and from the Bottom of our Hearts shall be enabled to say, with St Paul, *God forbid that I should Glory in any Thing, save the Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST ; by which I am crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to me.*

Give up yourself to God without reserve. This implies such a State or Habit of Heart, as does Nothing of itself, from its own Reason, Will or Choice, but stands always in Faith, Hope, and absolute Dependence upon being led by the Spirit of God into every Thing that is according to his Will ; seeking Nothing by Designing, Reasoning, and Reflection, how you shall best promote the Honour of God, but in Singleness of Heart, meeting every Thing that every Day brings forth, as something that comes from God,
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and is to be received, and gone through by you, in such an Heavenly Use of it, as you would suppose the HOLY JESUS would have done, in such Occurrences.—This is an attainable Degree of Perfection ; and by having CHRIST and his Spirit always in your Eye, and Nothing else, you will never be left to yourself, nor without the full Guidance of GOD.



L E T T E R XII.

To Mr T. L.

My dearly beloved Friend,



BEGIN, as I did my last, with assuring you, that I love to hear from you.

I am in some Concern about the *Activity* of your religious Spirit, which I have often cautioned you against.—You have seen, and as I think deeply apprehended, the true Ground, on which Man's Redemption stands. This Ground has been
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shewn you, not only from the plain Letter of Scripture, but confirmed by the whole Frame of Nature.

Every Thing in Heaven and Earth, every Thing that you inwardly or outwardly feel, or know of your own Soul, and Body, are all shewn to bear infallible Witness to these two fundamental Truths of the Gospel : That our first Father died to his first Life in God ; and that nothing in the whole Nature of Things, can be our Redemption, but the first Life of God, born again of God in the Soul. You have had the fullest Proof, that Man was created in this high Perfection of Life. You have had the fullest Proof, that *Adam* had no other Way of dying to Heaven, or losing his first State in God, but by the working of his Will ; and that every Son of *Adam*, is to this Day, only That which his *Faith*, or the *working* of his *Will*, or the Desire of his Heart (for they are all the same Thing) maketh him to be. *Jesus Christ* is the Divine Nature, which must be alive again in Man. But the Life of the Deity can only arise by a Birth in us, by the Hunger and Faith and Desire of the Heart, or the working of the Will turned to it ; and this is the Faith in Christ that does all.

To what Purpose therefore, is so much anxious Enquiry about this or that ? Why this running after every one, to hear the History

story of Himself, and the Secrets of his own fancied Experience?

If you know a Man to be a *Fatalist*, do you not enough know, that he cannot explain the Mysteries of the Gospel, all which have a quite contrary Ground.

If a Man has no Notion, or Belief of the Fall of Man, can he tell you either the Nature, or the Necessity of Christian Redemption? What Room could there be for the Divine Philanthropy, if it could be supposed, that Man and the World had not a better State, and Life from Him at first, than they have now?

If a Man denies the Necessity of the new Birth from above, will you believe that this proceeds from an intimate Familiarity with Christ, teaching him in private, the Disbelief of that which he taught publickly when on Earth? What Folly to tell you, that you are only in a *Legal State*, unless he could prove to you, that you have no Aversion to Wickedness, nor abstain from any Sin, but so far as the Fear and Dread of Punishment keep you from it. For this is the Truth of the Legal State; but when Sin is disliked, and the Commandments kept through a *Love of God*, and a Desire of Divine Goodness, There is the Man in Christ a new Creature, no longer under the Yoke of the Law, but living in the Freedom, and Spirit of God.

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If a Man tells you that Jesus is not God, surely it is Time to have no Fellowship with him. If he tells you, you are not to pray to God, but to Jesus, who is only a Creature, is not this telling you, that it is unlawful for us to pray, as Jesus taught his Disciples? And if it was wrong to pray to God, the Old and the New Testament are, from the Beginning to the End, full of false Religion? Or will he say, that though under the Old Testament Men might rightly pray to the Deity, yet we, by being Christians, have lost this Privilege of Relation to, and Dependance upon God? But surely, I need not expose the Extravagancy of these Things, nor exhort you to be weary of such Entertainment.

You tell me, that you cannot help thinking with Mr S. *That all partial Systems of Salvation, are greatly derogatory to the Goodness of God*: But that you would say this to very few, but myself. But dear Soul, why should you say this to me? I have without any Scruple, openly declared to all the World, that from Eternity to Eternity, nothing can come from God but mere infinite Love.—In how many ways have I proved, and asserted, that there neither is, nor can be any Wrath, or *Partiality* in God, but that every Creature must have all that Happiness, which the infinite Love and Power of God can help it to. Can I, or any Creature, possibly say more of
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an *Impartiality* in God? And is it not quite unreasonable, to ask more about it, or to carry it farther? You say, the *seeming Impossibility* of the *Spirit* and *Light* of God, arising up again in any Creature, that has extinguished it, is, you presume, the strongest Argument that can be offered, in Support of everlasting Misery. And therefore you say, you have chosen, with Submission, to examine the Force of this principal Argument, which runs through the APPEAL, and my other Writings. But, my dear Friend, how came you to say this? For this is so far from being the principal, or any Argument that runs through my *Appeal*, and other Books, that there is not one single Word, in all the *Appeal*, nor any other of my Books, that touches upon this Matter, till you come to the last Book, viz. *The Way to Divine Knowledge*; and even in that Book, the Impossibility is so far from being asserted, that it is there affirmed, that this Impossibility is not proved, nor ever likely to be so. Will you therefore charge me with proving a Thing, that I shew cannot be proved? It is my capital Doctrine, That God is all Love, and merely a *Will to all Goodness*; that he must eternally will that to the Creature, which he willed at its Creation.

But, my dear Soul, debate not such Matters as these, either with me, or any one else. Stop your Ears to all that you hear about

about them, and turn from every one that will lead you into them. The Perplexity that you make to yourself in such Matters, is Death to the Divine Life within you, is a great Abuse of God's Goodness towards you, and is a likely Way for you to lose the Peace and Joy of that Divine Light, which has so largely opened itself within you.

Mr G. and Mr S. both of them (as they say) come out of the Depths of Hell, full of a New risen Divine Light within them. The first makes me a greater Blasphemer of God, than the Devils are, [N. B.] because I say, God has no other Nature, or Will towards every Creature, but Love and Goodness.

The other calls me Blind, and Ignorant, because I have not a self-evident Knowledge of the Salvation of Devils. Now was you to find out a Third, laying Claim to the same certainty of Divine Light, as these two do, you might perhaps have them both condemned by one who had a *Self-evident Knowledge* of Absolute Election, and Reprobation, and who knew with as great Certainty, that God damns some eternally to make his Power to be known, as Mr S. knows Christ to be only a Creature, and that Prayer is not to be made to God, but solely to this Creature.

Dear L. Son of my Love, I do not know that ever I wasted my Spirits in Writing, or
Thinking

Thinking in the Manner of this Letter before, and trust I never shall again. But Love towards you, and a hearty Zeal for your true Growth in the Spiritual Life, has compelled me into this Wrangle.

Put away all needless Curiosity in Divine Matters, and look upon every Thing to be so, but that which helps you to die to *yourself*, that the Spirit and Life of Christ may be formed, and revealed in you.

As for the Purification of *all Human Nature*, either in this World, or some after Ages, I fully believe it. And as to that of Angels, if it is possible, I am glad of it, and also sure enough, that it will then come to pass.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XIII.

To the same.

My Dear Friend,

THANK you for the favour of your's. In the Two Extracts, you have sent, the Writer says twice, *He cannot adopt the Dark side of my System.* If what I have wrote may be called a System, it has put a full End to all that was *Dark*, and *Partial*, in every other System. It makes all the Universe both of Nature and Grace, to be an Edifice of Love, kept up and governed by Love. For I allow of no other God but Love, who from Eternity to Eternity, can have no other Will towards the Creature, but to communicate Good ; and that no Creature can have any Misery, from which infinite Goodness can deliver it. Where then is the Dark Side ? Must I assert God to be more than infinitely Good ?

*Dear Soul,**June 9, 1752.**Adieu.*

L E T T E R



LETTER XIV.

To the same.

My dear L.



CANNOT tell you how much I love you. But that which of all Things I have most at Heart, with Regard to you, is the real Progress of your Soul in the divine Life. Heaven seems to be awakened in you. It is a tender Plant. It requires Stillness, Meekness, and the Unity of the Heart, totally given up to the unknown Workings of the Spirit of God, which will do all its Work in the calm Soul, that has no Hunger or Desire, but to escape out of the Mire of its Earthly Life, into its lost Union and Life in God.

I mention this, out of a Fear of your giving into an Eagerness into many Things, which though seemingly innocent, yet divide and weaken the Workings of the divine Life within you. For a *Multiplicity of Wills*, is the one only Evil, Disease, and Misery, both
N of

of our Souls and Bodies. That which can make the Soul to have only *one Will*, and *one Love*, is the *universal Tincture*, both for Soul and Body. And nothing else is it. That alone can take the Fall, or Curse out of the Body, which can take it out of the Soul. For the Curse through all Nature, and Creature, is but *one* and the *same* thing, viz. *The Absence of the Heavenly Power*. Heaven is dead in Gold, just as it is dead in Man; and its heavenly Tincture can only be made alive, in the same Manner, and from the same Power, as the inward Man is born again of the Water, and Spirit from above.

Our outward Man must be tormented, crucified, mortified in the *Fire* of our own Flesh and Blood; and then it is as the gross Gold in the Crucible heated by earthly Fire. But as no fiery Torments of our own Flesh and Blood, can glorify our inward Man, and set Him in his first angelic State, so no outward Fire can torment Gold into its first Heavenly State. Our Lord said to the crucified Thief, To Day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise.

Now no one is a Divine Magus, till he is thus qualified to say to his *Subject*, To Day shalt Thou be *with me* in Paradise. If He himself is not in Paradise, he can do no paradifical Work. But, my Friend, let not what I here say, put you upon disputing this Point
with

L E T T E R XIV. 179

with any one, for I say it for a quite Contra-
ry End, to shew you the Vanity of all such
Discourse.

My dear Soul,

Oct. 16, 1752.

Adieu.



L E T T E R XV.

To the same.

My dear L.



HEARTILY thank you for
your Last. Talk no more of
obtruding upon me with your
Letters. Every Thing that
comes from you is welcome.
I have no need to write any Thing to you,
for you know all that I have to say. You
stand upon the same Ground, that I do.
And you have Nothing to do, but to be stead-
fast and unmoveable in that Light, which
God has vouchsafed to you.

But, my Friend, take Notice of this, no
Truths, however solid and well grounded,

help you to any Divine Life, but so far as they are *taught, nourished, and strengthened* by an Unction from above; and that Nothing more *dries, and extinguishes* this heavenly Unction, than a *talkative, reasoning* Temper, that is always catching at every Opportunity of hearing, or telling some religious Matters.

You have found enough, to prove to you, that all must be found in God, manifested in the Life of your Soul. And I must say again, shut your Eyes, and stop your Ears, to all Religious Tales.

My dear Soul,

Feb. 12, 1753.

Adieu.



LETTER XVI.

To the same.

My dear L.



YOU have communicated to me several Letters, that you have wrote to your Friends, and I much approve of the Spirit in which you have wrote them. Only I must repeat, what I have often said, Have a care of
of

of too much Eagerness to set other people right, lest it lead you too far from Home, or too much exhaust that Breath, which is to keep up the Strength of your own inward Life. I believe you understand me.

You want a Remedy, to prevent the Growth of *Suicide*, and *Madness*. They are not to be remedied by any *new Way* of setting forth the Folly, and Extravagancy of them. When the Fruit is evil, there is no Remedy, but in putting the Root of the Tree in a better State.

Pride, is the Father and Mother of *Suicide* and *Madness*. Would you have a share in removing these Evils, you must not cast about for high Speculations, there is but *one Step* to be taken, and that is, to shew the Necessity of Dying to *Pride*, and seeking for Salvation only in *Humility*. JESUS CHRIST is the only Peace, and Rest, and Satisfaction of human Life. This is absolute, and admits of no Exception. St *John the Baptist* was the true Preparer of the Way to CHRIST; if you think of any other Way, it is Labour lost. This Point is absolutely determined where CHRIST saith, *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. If they believe not Moses, nor the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arise from the Dead.*

Miracles, and Demonstrations, you see, are in vain, till *Moses*, and the Prophets are believed.

Now *Moses* is *Sin*, made known by the Law, and the Prophets, are *Faith* and *Hope* in God. And these two Things must have their State, and work in the Soul, before it can have any Benefit from CHRIST and his Miracles. If you would therefore give some Check to the Growth of Suicide and Madness, it cannot be by attacking them in themselves, or speaking to the Unreasonableness of their *particular* Nature, this is as useless, as a Miracle to Him, that heareth neither *Moses*, nor the Prophets.

Now as *Moses* and the Prophets were of Necessity, before the Coming of CHRIST, so it must be in every human Soul.

And this proves the Truth, of what has been so often asserted, of the Importance of apprehending the Fall of Man, in its true and full Depth. For to hear *Moses* and the Prophets is in Reality only this, *viz.* Man become truly sensible of his *impure, and fallen* Nature, and *looking up to God* to be delivered from it. Then, whether he has, or has not, ever seen the Bible, he is a true Believer of *Moses* and the prophets, is that Lost Sheep, that is sure of being found, that weary and heavy laden, that must find Rest and Refreshment in CHRIST.

It

It matters not therefore, my Friend, what you are upon, whether you would save a Man from *Deism*, *Debauchery*, or *Suicide*, you must begin in the same Place, from one and the same Ground, and this as unavoidably, as every Fruit must have its Beginning from the Root, and from the Root in its right State.

The Amiability of any Virtue, or the horrid Nature of any Vice, whilst only considered as in themselves, are but as Pictures set before our Eyes, and have no other Effect upon us. And this is the Unprofitableness of all *Moral Instructions*, whether Heathen, or Christian.

If you can help a Man to seek, and find, and know Himself, and his real Relation to God; to know that he has neither inward, nor outward Evil, but because he has lost his *true State*, and place in God; and that therefore Nothing can be his peace and Happiness, but his first divine Life, or Nature quickened again in Him, then you have done all that you can for him, whatever his Malady is, — But enough of this.

Dear Soul,

Aug. 4, 1753.

Adieu,



L E T T E R X V I I .

To the same.

My dear L.

YOU have a Scruple about the wonderous Lives of the Fathers in the *Desarts*, because in such Contrariety to his Character, who went about doing good. But if you only consider what you have said of them yourself, that the reading of their Lives, at *once struck you with the deepest Devotion, and made you think what a Noviciate you was in the Love of God*, you would have Reason enough to place them amongst the faithful, and true Disciples of Him, who went about doing Good. For what greater Good, than to do that to others, for so many Ages, which they have done for you? They are not written to raise an Emulation in you, to copy after them; nor is there any Reason to think, that their Story is not much exaggerated. But be that as it will, it is certain, they were the Salt of the World for that Time, and that the good Providence of God blessed his Church with them.

They

They are not for you to read, but as it were *en passant*, or for a little Change of Air, and their Particularity of Life no more concerns you, than that of *John the Baptist*.

God's last Dispensation to the World, is the opening the Ground, and Mystery of all Things, to which every Blindness, and Vanity, and Strife of Human Life must, sooner or later, be forced to give up itself.

The Children of this Dispensation have no Occasion to look backwards. It is like learning your *A B C*, when you are called and qualified to read.

Be not too fond of Abstemiousness, nor too much attached to a Milk Diet; let nothing be a Reason for your doing, or not doing any Thing of this Kind, but the Health and Strength of your Body. As soon as you are able to bear a stronger Diet, I would have you by all Means to use it. There is no more Harm in getting Strength from good Food, than from sound Sleep. And this Kind of Diet, is only to be used as a Remedy for a Time.

Dear Soul,

Feb. 9, 1754.

Adieu.

L E T T E R



LETTER XVIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,



THE Variety of Trials, you have lately met with, are but a Specimen of what you are to expect, in some Form or other, so long as you breath the Air of this fallen World.—The longer we are without them, the more our Need of them is increased. And they never give great Smart, but where something is to be torn off, that sticks too close to us.—One Reflection upon these sacred Words, “ My Kingdom is not of this World :—The Son of Man hath not where “ to lay his Head,” are sufficient to take not only the Sting out of every Cross, that can here befall us, but even to make us afraid, and ashamed of being pleased with any Thing, that has the Name of Worldly Honour, and Prosperity.

You have no Reason to wonder at any Thing you see, or hear, of the Partiality, Selfishness, Envy, and Enmity, that so often breaks out between Brothers and Sisters of
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the same Blood.—For if *Blood-Relations*, considered as such, could have any true Goodness, or unselfish Regard to one another, we should not be under the Necessity of being born again from above.

Will it do you any good, to tell you, that thus says my Heart, without speaking a Word. “*Let Nothing live in me, but the Redeeming Power of thy holy Jesus, Nothing pray in me but thy holy Spirit.*”——This is my Ship, in which, I would be always at Sea.—All that I seek, or mean, either for myself, or others, by every Height and Depth of divine Knowledge, given us by God in his illuminated *Behmen*, is only for this End, that we may be more willing, and glad to become such little Children, as our Lord has told us, are the only Heirs of the Kingdom of God.

The Piercing Critic may, and naturally will grow in Pride, as fast, as his skill in Words discovers itself.—And every kind of Knowledge, that shews the Scholar, the Orator, the Disputer, the Commentator, the Historian, his *own Powers and Abilities*, are the *same* Temptation to Him, that *Eve* had from the Serpent; and He will get no more good by the Love and Relish of such Knowledge, than she got by her Love of the Tree, that was so desirable to make one wise.

But

But He whose Eyes are opened, to see into this *Mystery of all Things*, sees Nothing but *Death to himself*, and to every Thing, that he had called, or delighted in as his own. This is the *bold Depth* of his Knowledge. And if you would know its *aspiring Height*, it consists in learning to know, that which the Angels and Twenty-four Elders about the Throne of God, knew, when they cast down their Crowns, before him that sat on the Throne, saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, thou art worthy to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.—It is to know, that the Triune Majesty of Father, Son, and holy Spirit, are the threefold Power, Life, Glory, and Perfection of every Creature, that sings praises to God, in Heaven and in Earth. This is the *proud Knowledge* of those, who are let into the Holy of Holies, opened by the Spirit of God in his chosen Instrument, *Behmen*. Which goes no deeper, than to see the *Nothingness* of Man, ascends no higher, than to know that God is *All*; which begets nothing in Man, but that which was begotten in *Paul*, when he cried out, *God forbid, that I should glory in any Thing, but the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,



O U R Strictures upon Messieurs of the Foundery, the Tabernacle, &c. are very just. These Gentlemen seem to have no other Bottom to stand upon, but that of Zeal. I hope God will direct it for them, that more good may come from it, than the World is willing to believe.—But I say no more of them.—I would advise you not to enter into Disputes with them, nor any others, in Defence of those Principles, which are the very Life and Heart of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—No one begins to object against them, but on the Account of something that is personal, either with Regard to himself, or the Author of them, or because they are contrary to his Views and Situation in the World. He who could free himself from these Prejudices, would want no one to persuade him of the Truth of them.

Mr

Mr *J. W.* is an ingenious Man; and the Reason why his Letter to me, is such a juvenile Composition of Emptiness, and Pertness, as is below the Character of any Man, who had been serious in Religion but half a Month, is because, it was not *Ability*, but Necessity, that put his pen into his Hand.—He had condemned my Books, preached much against them, and to make all sure, forbid his People the use of them.—And for a Cover to all this, he promised from Time to Time to write against them.—Therefore an Answer was to be made at all Adventures.—What you happen to hear of Mr *J. W.* concerning me, or my Books, let it dye with you.—Wish him God speed in every Thing that is good.—But this you may easily know, that He, and the *Pope*, have the same Reasons, and are under the same Necessity of condemning, and anathematizing the Mystery revealed by God, in *J. B.*

Sept. 1756.

Adieu.

P. S. I have no objection to your learning the *French* Language, but think you much in the right, in intending to proceed very leisurely in it, and as it were by the by.—To learn, and Love the Language of the *internal Speaker*, is more than to have the Tongues of Men and Angels.

L E T T E R

LETTER XX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,



WAS much concerned at the Account you sent me, of the State of your health, and think it very adviseable, to seek out for Help.—But there is the Difficulty where to find it.—All is so very superficial in the Art of Physick, and from so poor a Ground, that one has little to like in one Physician more than in another, but his Personal Tempers, and Behaviour.—Air, and gentle Exercise much pursued, must be greatly beneficial to you.—If your Physician be for your Purpose, he will not load you with Shop-Medicines, nor ought you to submit to any one that does.—Nothing can assist you, but some simple Regimen, that gradually lessens the Hectic in your Blood.

My dear Brother Pilgrim, be of good Comfort, our *Road* of Life is *such*, that Weakness can help us on as fast as Strength.—Use outward Medicines, as if you used them

them not.—The *Universal* is within you, and whether you find it in a sickly, or a healthy Body, is but a small Matter.

Daily, hourly, thankful Resignation to God in every Thing, is the best Regimen, you can enter into, both for Soul and Body.—Every good Wish attends my dear Fellow-Traveller out of Time, into Eternity.

Octob. 10, 1756.

Farewell.

L E T T E R XXI.

To G. W.



THE large Account you have given of yourself, is very affecting, and I hope God will turn all the Variety of your past Distress, into Means of a future solid Peace, and Rest in his divine Love.

To be weary and heavy Laden, is to have the highest Fitness to receive that Rest, that CHRIST alone can give. These are the persons that he called to him, when he was upon Earth. They who are content with themselves,

themselves, are in the utmost Danger of never knowing that Happiness, for which they were created.

For a while, consider yourself in such Solitude, as if there was only God and you in the World, free from every Thought, but that of desiring to be wholly and solely his, and looking wholly to his Goodness, to be delivered out of the Misery of your fallen State.

Stand firmly in this Faith, That God and the Kingdom of Heaven are certainly within you, and within you for this only Reason, that they may become your Salvation.—As all therefore is within, so let all your Care be turned inwards, in loving, adoring, and praying to this GOD and CHRIST within you.

Be not too eager about much Reading. Nor read any Thing, but that which nourishes, strengthens, and establishes this Faith in you, of an inward Saviour, who is the Life of your Soul. To grow up in this Faith, is taking the best Means, of attaining to the best Knowledge in all Divine Matters.

Cast away all Reflections about yourself, the World, or your past Life. And let all be swallowed up, or lost in this joyful Thought, that you have found the Messiah, the Saviour of the World, not in Books, not in History, but in the Birth, and Bottom of your own Soul. Give yourself up to this Birth of Heaven within you, expect all
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from it, let it be the humble, faithful, longing Desire of your Heart, and desire no Knowledge, but that which is born of it, and proceeds from it. Stand only in this Thirst of Knowledge, and then all that you know will be Spirit and Life.

With a Heart full of good Wishes to you,

I am,

May 8 1750.

Your's, &c.



L E T T E R XXII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,



KNOW not myself, how to write to the most illuminated Person upon Earth, for Advice, or Instruction. And the more dark, and distressed my State should be, the more I should be averse to seek Counsel of any Creature; not from an Opinion of any Sufficiency in myself, but from a Fulness

Fulness of Conviction, that I run away from *Relief*, and deprive myself of *true Light*, and *Comfort*, by not seeking, and depending upon God ALONE for it.

All my Writings have no other End, but to communicate *this Conviction* to my Readers, and consequently to teach them to have *done with me*, as soon as I have convinced them, that God and CHRIST and the Kingdom of Heaven are only to be found by Man, in his own Heart, and only capable of being found there, by his own Love of them, Faith in them, and absolute Dependance upon them.

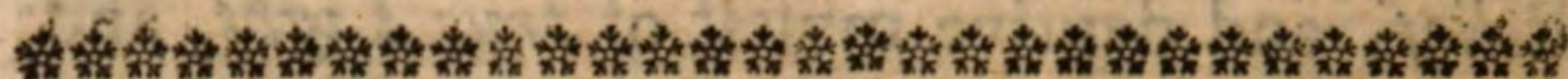
What room, therefore, for calling out for Help and Direction, when once it is known, that all consists in an implicit blind Faith, in Purity of Love, and total Resignation to the Spirit of God? For where can these be exercised, but in the States and Trials through which Human Life must pass.

And to acquiesce in God, when Things are inwardly, and outwardly easy with us, but to cast about for Help from something that is not God, when Distress and Darkness come upon us, is the Error of Errors, and the greatest Hindrance to our true Union with God in CHRIST JESUS.

I am with much Truth and Sincerity,

Sept. 22, 1754.

Your affectionate Friend.



L E T T E R XXIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

THE Charge of *Spinosizm* brought against me by Dr *Warburton*, has all the Folly and Weakness, &c. &c. that can well be imagined. For as *Spinosizm*, is nothing else but a gross confounding of God and Nature, making them to be only one and the same thing, so the full Absurdity, and absolute Impossibility of it, can only be fundamentally proved, by that Doctrine which can go to the Bottom of the Matter, and demonstrate the essential, eternal, and absolute Distinction, between God and Nature; a Thing done over and over, from Page to Page in those Books, from which the Doctor has extracted *Spinosizm*, just with as much Acuteness, as if he had spied rank *Warburtonianism*, in my Letter to the Right Reverend the Bishop of *London*.

Now although the Difference between God and Nature, has always been supposed, and believed, yet the true Ground of such Distinction,

inction, or the *Why*, the *How*, and in *What*, they are essentially different, and must be so to all Eternity, was to be found in no Books, till the Goodness of God, in a Way not less than that of Miracle, made a poor illiterate Man, in the Simplicity of a Child, to open and relate the deep mysterious Ground of all Things; in which is shewn the *Birth and Beginning* of Nature, or the first Workings of the *inconceivable* God, opening and manifesting his *hidden, Tri-une Deity*, in an outward State of Glory, in the Splendor of united *Fire, Light, and Spirit*, all kindled, and distinguished, all united and beatified, by the hidden, invisible, inconceivable, supernatural Father, Son, and holy Spirit, working all the Glories in Heaven, and every kind of Life, and Blessing on Earth, by visible, and invisible Fire, Light, and Spirit.

This is the wonderful Gift of God to these last distracted Ages of the World; and as every Purpose of God must stand, and sooner or later produce all that, which God intended by it; so the more the Wise and the Learned in all Churches, reject this Counsel of God, the more they will promote its Success over themselves, and only help it, to come forth with greater Strength, and Glory to God, by being owned, and proclaimed by the Mouths of Babes, and Sucklings.

Babel hath always had *Men* for its Builders ;
but the Kingdom of God ever was, and ever
will be made up of little Children.

Farewel.

April 10, 1757.

P. S. I have read the Pamphlet you sent
on *Divinity Studies*. It may be said to be
much better, than most of the kind in this
and the last Century, and infinitely beyond
Mr *Wesley's* *Babylonish Address to the Clergy* ;
but yet so wrong, as to be worse than no Ad-
vice at all.——We seem to be farther from
the Gospel, in Point of Spirit, than in Di-
stance of Time.——What shall I say? Ba-
bel is not a City, it is the whole Christian
World. As to all these Directors of Divinity-
Students, no more Folly need be laid to
their Charge, than is done by our Lord in
these Words, *Without me ye can do nothing* ;
as *my Father sent me, so send I you* ; the *Holy*
Spirit shall guide you into all Truth. To all
which the Apostle subscribeth in these Words,
Who hath made us able Ministers, not of the
Letter, but of the Spirit.

Now, put these Words of Christ and his
Apostle, at the Beginning and End of Mr
Wesley's Address, and then you will see,
that almost all that is betwixt them, is empty
Babble,

L E T T E R XXIII. 199

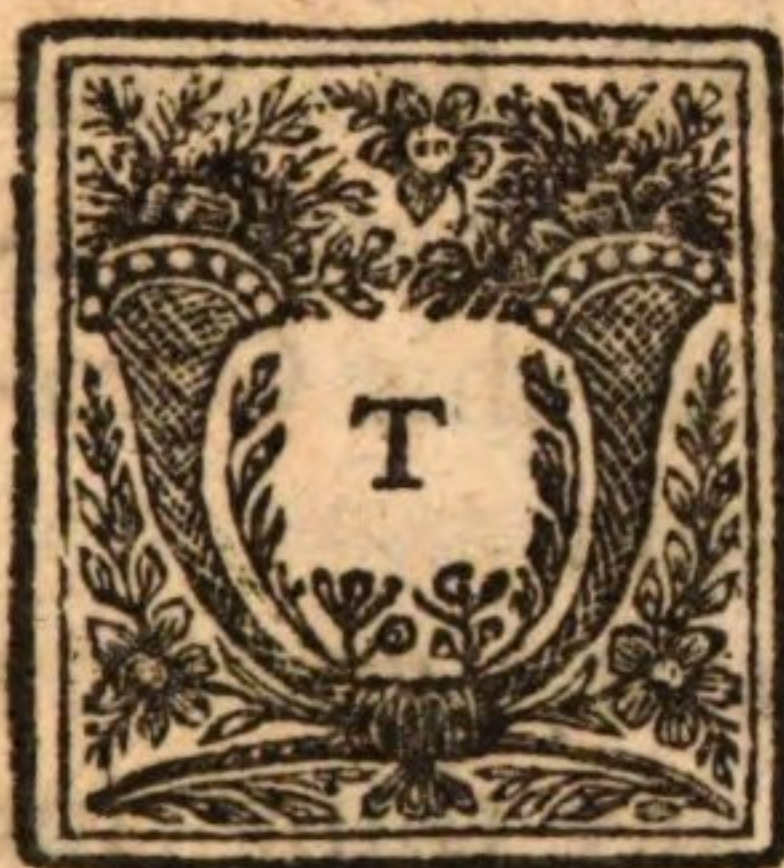
Babble, fitter for an old *Grammarian*, that was grown blear-eyed in mending *Dictionaries*, than for one who had tasted the Powers of the World to come, and had found the *Truth as it is in Jesus*.



L E T T E R XXIV.

To Mr T. L.

My dear L.



AMPER with no Physicians, but content yourself, to have that Share of Health, which a regular and good Life can help you to.—Reflect not upon your predominant Complexion, or how long it will be, before you get from under its Power.—St *Paul* wanted to be delivered from his Thorn in the Flesh. He had all he prayed for, though the Thorn might continue, when God said to him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*; this was better to him, than if his Thorn had been taken from him.—This enabled him to say, I will glory in my *Infirmities*; for *when I am weak, then I am strong*. You believe, that if it was not for earnest and continual Prayer, your Turn

to Melancholy would get the better of you. —You cannot believe this too much, for nothing else can preserve you, from being led away by every other evil Temper. But let Resignation to God, be the predominant Part of your Spirit of Prayer; it is not so much ardent Desires, as humble Resignation to be as God pleases, that keeps the Heart in the highest Union with him. —Faith and Hope and Love get their best Strength, and work their highest Work, when Resignation is the Salt wherewith they are seasoned.

You think, if you was to live an hundred Years in an *abstracted Contemplation*, some Property of Nature, would still be occasionally breaking forth in you. —What occasion had you, my Friend, to make this Complaint about such a Contemplation?

You have no Business with it, nor any Reason to expect it should do any thing for you. —Had you changed your Words, and said, I believe if I was for a hundred Years to be wholly trusting in, and depending upon God, to do that for me, which He has promised to do for all that trust in Him, it would not be done: —Had you expressed your Complaint in these Words, you would have seen, that neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Love, nor Resignation, would have allowed you to make it. —Look at yourself, at the Power of Time, or any thing that this or
that

that Complexion does, and then you may be afraid of every thing ; but look at God, as him that is to do all for you, and in you, and then you need be afraid of Nothing.—A Thorn, or no Thorn, bad or good Blood, with all its Effects, lose all their Difference, as soon as you know, that you are not your own, nor left to yourself, nor where to seek a Phyfician, that will not leave you unhealed.

We know that all Things must work together for Good, to them that love God. Now what signifies what the Things are, if we are to have the same good from them, be they what they will ? Let Complexion shew itself, let the dead Ashes of old Sins, seem to be ready to come to Life again, what is all this, but helping us to be more alive unto God ? Flesh will be Flesh as long as we live, but every State of the Flesh may help us to grow in the Spirit.—Therefore rejoice evermore, in every Thing give Thanks, and call nothing but this, *abstracted Contemplation.*

Farewel.

L E T T E R



LETTER XXV.

To a Clergyman of Westmoreland.

Reverend Sir,

 CONCERNING the following Texts, God hardned the Heart of Pharaoh ;—He hath mercy on whom *He will have mercy, and whom He will he hardeneth* ;——Good and Evil are from Lord ;——*I create Light, and I create Darknes* ; you ask, how these Things can be consistently affirmed of a God, all Love and Goodness to his Creatures ?

I would ask you also, is there any Difficulty of admitting the Truth of this Scripture, *In God we live, and move, and have our Being* ? does this clash with the Idea of a God all Love and Goodness to the Creatures ?——Now take all the contrary Things that are said of God, with Relation to that which passes between God and Man, and they all imply no more, affirm no more, than the single foregoing Text, namely, that in every
State

State of the Life of Man, be it what it will, either under a Sense and Enjoyment of Good, or the Power and Pain of Evil, it is all owing to this *divine, original, essential Relation* between God and Man, or because in him we *live, and move, and have our Being.*——

For Man, thus come from God, must through the whole Course, or endless Ages of his Life, neither know, nor find, nor feel any thing of Good or Evil, Life or Death, Happiness or Misery, but solely because of *That*, which God is in him, and to him, and because of *That*, which he is in God, and hath from him, by his original Birth or Creation.

The earthly Animals, whose Birth is only in and from this World, can have no Evil of Sin, or Misery in their State, from God; and that only for this one Reason, because they are not born of God, or partakers of the divine Nature. Therefore God's creating Evil in Man, is the same Thing, as if it was said, the *divine Birth* in Man, is that which creates his Evil, because he could have no Sin of a wrathful, proud, hardened Heart, these Things could neither exist in him, or be known by him, but because he came into Being by a divine Birth.——Angels could not be diabolical Spirits of Darknes, fiery Dragons of Wrath, Fury, Malice, Vengeance, Envy, Hatred, &c. &c. but because they
were

were all born of God, to live and move and have their Being in him. This has created all the Evil of every Kind, that they can feel or know in their whole State.

All the Difficulty of reconciling such contrary Things as are said of God, that He willeth only *Life* and *Good*, and yet that Evil and Death, are said to come from him, arises from our considering the Operations of God in a *creaturely Manner*, or as we should understand the same contrary Things, if they were affirmed of any Creature.—Whereas the Operation of God, in its whole Kind and Nature, is as different from any Thing that can be done by Creatures, as the Work and Manner of Creation, is different, in Power, Nature, and Manner, from that which Creatures can do to one another.—For (N. B.) the Operation of God is never *in* or *with* the Creature in any *other Manner*, or doing any *other Thing*, but that which it *was* and *did* in the Creation of them.—This, and this alone is the working of the Deity in Heaven and on Earth ; nothing comes from him, or is done by him through all the Eternity of his Creatures, but that *essential* Manifestation of himself in them, which began the Glory and Perfection of their first Existence.—Now from this one, single, immutable Operation of God, that He can be nothing else in, or towards the Creature,
but

but that same Love and Goodness, that He was to it, at its Creation, it necessarily follows, that to the Creature that turns from him, God can be nothing else to it, but the Cause of all its Evil and miserable State. Hence is that of the Apostle, that *Sin cometh by the Law, because where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.*—Now God, or the divine Nature in Man, is the One great Law of God in Man, from which, all that is Good and all that is Evil in him, hath its whole State and Nature.—His Life can have no Holiness or Goodness in it, but as the divine Nature within him, is the Law by which he lives. He can commit no other Sin, nor feel any kind of Hurt or Evil from it, but what comes from resisting, or rebelling against *That* of God, which is in him; and therefore the Good and Evil of Man, are equally from God.—And yet this could not be, but because of this Ground, viz. that God is unchangeable Love and Goodness, and has only *one Will and Work* of Love and Goodness towards the Creature.—Just as the Law could not make Sin, or Evil, but because it has no Sin or Evil in itself, but is immutably righteous, holy, and good, and has only *one Will and one Work* towards Man, whether he receives Good or Evil by it.—Therefore the righteous, holy Law, that is so, because it never changes its good Will, and
Work

Work towards Man, can truly say of itself these two contrary Things, *I create Good*, and *I create Evil*, without the least Contradiction.—In the like Truth, and from the same Ground, it must be said, that Happiness and Misery, Life and Death, Tenderness and Hardness of Heart, are from God, or because God is that which He is, in and to the Birth and Life of Man.

This is the one true Key to the State of Man *before* his Fall, to his State *after* his Fall, and to the whole Nature of his Redemption. All which three States, are in a few Words of our Saviour, set forth in the clearest and strongest Degree of Light. *I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, bringeth forth much Fruit.*—This was Man's first created State of Glory and Perfection, it was a living and abiding in God, such a Birth and Communion of Life with him, and from him, as the Branch hath in and from the Vine.

The Nature of Man's fallen State, and whence he has all the Evil that is in it, is set forth in the following Words, *If a Man abide not in me (the true Vine) he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered, and Men gather them, and they are cast into the Fire and burned.* This comprehends the whole of Man's fallen State, namely, a being broken off from the Life of God, and therefore become

come such a poor, withered, helpless Creature, as may have all that done to him, as a Firebrand of Hell and Devils, which Men may do to a broken off, withered Branch of the Vine. And his State is as different from that of his Creation, as a withered Branch, smoaking and burning in the Fire, is different from its first State of Life and Growth in the rich Spirit of the Vine.—Again, the whole of Man's redeemed State, is in the following Words,—*I am the Bread of Life, that came down from Heaven ; — He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever ; — Who so eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, — dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

This is our whole Redemption, it consists in nothing else, but having the full Life of God, or Birth of Christ begotten, and born in us again. — And thus do these three States of Man fully shew, that our first Perfection, our miserable Fall, and blessed Redemption, have all that they have in them, whether of Glory, or Misery, merely and solely because God alone is all that is good, and can be nothing else but good towards the Creature ; and that neither Angel, nor Man can be happy or miserable, but because it either hath, or hath not, this one God of Goodness essentially living and operating in it.

What

What a Number of Things called Religion, are here cut off at once? since nothing is Life, Happiness, and Glory, but the *one essential Operation* of the Triune God of Love, and Goodness within us; nothing is Death, Evil, or Misery, but the Departure, or turning from this essential God of our Lives, to something that we would have from ourselves, or the Creatures that are about us.—And how greatly is he deluded, who living among the Throng of religious Schemes, thinks this, or that, or any Thing in Nature, can be his Atonement, his Reconciliation, and Union with God, but the Spirit, the Body, and the Blood of Christ forming themselves into a new Creature within him. Then, and then only is he that first Man that God created, in whom alone he can be well pleased. But till then, he is that Man, whom the *Cherubs* two-edged flaming Sword will not suffer to enter into Paradise.—How is it now, that we are to regain that first Birth of Christ? Why just in the same Way, as Adam had it at first. What did he then do? How did he help forward God's creating Power?—Now creating again, or restoring a first Life in God, is just the same thing, and the same sole Work of God, as creating us at first; and therefore we can have no more Share of Power in the one, than in the
the

the other.—Nothing lies upon us as Creatures fallen from God, or is required of us with Regard to our Growth in God, but not to *resist That*, which God is doing towards a *new Creation* of us.

That which God is doing towards the new Creation of us, had its Beginning before the Foundation of the World.—*In Christ Jesus*, saith St Paul, *we were chosen before the Foundation of the World*; the same as saying, that God out of his great Mercy, had chosen to preserve a Seed of the W O R D and S P I R I T of God in fallen Man, which thro' the Mediation of a God incarnate, should revive into that fullness of Stature in Christ Jesus, in which Adam was at first created. And all this Work of God towards a new Creation, is by that same *essential Operation* of God in us, which at first created us in his Image and Likeness. And therefore Nothing belongs to Man in it, but only to yield himself up to it, and not resist it.

Now who is it, that may be said to *resist* it? It is every one who does *not deny himself*, *take up his Cross daily*, and *follow Christ*. For every thing but this, is that *Flesh* that warreth against the Spirit. The whole Life of the *natural Man*, resisteth all that *essential Operation* of God, which would create us again in Christ Jesus.—Farther, every Religious Man resisteth it, in and by and through
P the

the whole Course of his Religion, who takes any thing to be the Truth of Piety, the Truth of Devotion, the Truth of Religious Worship, but Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Dependence upon *That alone*, which the All-Creating W O R D, and All-Sanctifying S P I R I T of God, inwardly, essentially, and vitally worketh in his Soul.

Would you know, how you are to understand this *essential* Operation of the Triune holy Deity in our Souls, and why nothing else is, or can be that Grace or Help of God, which bringeth Salvation, take this earthly Similitude of the Matter.

The *Light* and *Air* of this World, are universal Powers, that are essential to the Life of all the Creatures of this World. They are *essential*, because Nothing *sees*, till the Light has brought forth a *Birth* of itself in the Essence of the Creature, which Birth of Light can last no longer, than it is essentially united with the Operation of that universal Light, which brought it forth:—Air is also essential to the *Life* of the Creature, because nothing lives, till a Birth of the Air is born in it, nor any longer, than its own in-born Air, is in *essential Union* with that universal Air, and Operation of Air, that first brought it forth. —Now from this essential, unalterable Relation between Light and Air, and seeing, living Creatures, it plainly follows, that
Darkness

Darkness and Death, may be ascribed to them, as well as Seeing and Life.

Thus, if Light and Air could say any thing of *themselves* in outward Words, of that which they are, and do to all Animals; If the Light was to say, It is I that make *seeing* and *blind* Eyes; If the Air was to say, I create *Life*, and I create *Death*; could there be any Difficulty of understanding, or allowing the Truth of these Words? Or could they be true in any other Sense, but because where Light is not, there is the *Cause* of Darkness, and where Air is not, there is the *Cause* of Death.—And so in the strictest Truth of the Words, *seeing* and *blind* Eyes are from the Light; *living* and *dead* Bodies are from the Air. Because Darkness could not be, but because Light does not shine in it, nor the Body be dead, but because the breathing of the Air is not in it.

It is thus, with the *essential* Operation of the Triune Holy God, in the Life of all divine and godly Creatures, whether Men or Angels.—The Light and holy Spirit of God, are universal Powers, and *essential* to the Birth of a godly Life in the Creature; which creaturely Birth of a divine Life, can begin no sooner, than the W O R D and S P I R I T of God bring forth a Birth of themselves in the Creature, nor subsist any longer, than it is united with, and under the

continual Operation of that Word and Spirit, which brought it forth.—Hence it is truly said, that spiritual Life, and spiritual Death, spiritual Good and spiritual Evil, Happiness and Misery are from God, and that for this one Reason, because there is no Good, but in God, nor any other Operation of God in, and to the Creature, but that of heavenly Life, Light, Love, and Goodness.

When Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, to be an Habitation and Manifestation of the Triune God of Goodness, had by the Perverseness of a false Will, turned from his holy State of Life in God, and so was dead to the blessed Union, and essential Operation of God in his Soul, yet the Goodness of God towards Man, altered not, but stood in the same good Will towards Man as at the first, and willed, and could will nothing else towards the whole human Nature, but that every Individual of it, might be saved from that State of Death and Misery in an earthly Nature, into which they were fallen.

Hence, that is, from this unchangeable Love of God towards Man, which could no more cease, than God could cease, came forth that wonderful Scene of Providence, of such a variety of Means, and Dispensations, of Visions, Voices, and Messages from Heaven, of Law, of Prophecies, of Promises
and

and Threatnings, all adapted to the different States, Conditions, and Ages of the fallen World, for no other End, but by every Art of divine Wisdom, and Contrivance of Love, to break off Man from his earthly Delusion, and beget in him a Sense of his lost Glory, and so make him capable of finding again that blessed essential Operation of Father, Son, and holy Spirit in his Soul, which was the essential Glory of his first Creation.

Now, as in this Scene of a divine and redeeming Providence, God had to do with a poor, blind, earthly Creature, that had lost all Sense of heavenly Things, as they are in themselves, so the Wisdom of God, must often, as it were, humanize itself, and condescend to speak of himself after the Manner of Men. He must speak of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his Nose, &c. because the earthly Creature, the mere natural Man, could no otherwise be brought into any Sense of *That*, which God was to him.

But now, all this Process of divine Providence, was only for the sake of something higher; the Mystery of God in Man, and Man in God, still lay hid, and was no more opened, than the Mystery of a redeeming Christ, was opened in the Type of a Paschal Lamb.

Pentecost alone was *That*, which took away all Veils, and shewed the Kingdom of God,

as it was in itself, and set Man again under the immediate, essential Operation of God, which first gave Birth to a holy Adam in Paradise. Types and Shadows ended, because the substance of them was found. The cloven Tongues of Fire had put an End to them, by opening the divine Eyes, which Adam had closed up, unstopping the spiritual Ears, that he had filled with Clay, and making his dumb Sons to speak with new Tongues.

And what did they say? They said all old Things were gone, That a new Heaven and a new Earth were coming forth, That God himself was manifested in the Flesh of Men, who were now *all taught of God*. And what were they taught? That same which Adam was taught by his first created Life in God, namely, that the immediate, essential Operation of Father, Son, and holy Spirit, was henceforth the Birthright of all that were become true Disciples of Christ.— Thus ended the old Creation, and the Fall of Man, in a God manifested in the Flesh, dying in and for the World, and coming again in Spirit, to be the Life and Light of all the Sons of Adam.

Look now at all God's Dispensations to the Day of Pentecost, in this true point of View, as so many Schools of different Discipline and Education of the natural Man, till by a Birth from above, he could bear
the

the Language of Heaven, and be taught of God, and then you will sufficiently see the childish Folly of those grey-headed Doctors, who forgetting that the *last Times* are come, when God will be known only as a Spirit, worshipped only in Spirit, because every thing else is but Shadow, and not the Truth, yet set up themselves as Masters, or Rabbies of new Schools of their own, which can only keep up that doating Learning, and Wisdom of Words, which compelled the learned Jews, for the sake of God, and Goodness, for the sake of Law and Prophecy, to crucify the Christ of God, as a Beelzebub, and Blasphemer.

This old Logic and Criticism of Scribes and Pharisees, is that which robs disputing Christians of the Truth as it is in Jesus, and instead of the true Bread that came down from Heaven, feeds their unregenerate Hearts with the dry Husks of *That*, which can be got from Text set against Text in the outward Letter. Nay so wise are these verbal Proficients, as to think the Gospel must be false, and the Bible itself only fit to be burned, if *all That*, is not to be ascribed to God, as true of him, as he is in himself, which in Condescension to the poor, ignorant, fallen, earthly Creature, he speaks of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his turning his Back, and turning his Face, his

coming down, and going up, his fiery Wrath, his destroying Fury, everlasting Vengeance, &c. &c.—Whereas all these Things are said, not because of *That*, which God is in himself, in his holy, supernatural Being, but because of that, which Man is, in the Blindness of his fallen State, so ignorant of God, so averse to Godliness, as only capable for a Time, to be instructed by the Impressions of such Language:—That is, till the Threatnings of the Law, and the Word of Prophecy have done their Work, and that *Day-Star ariseth in the Heart*, which knoweth, and teacheth, that CREATOR, REDEEMER, and LOVE, are the one true unchangeable, Tri-une God, that Father, that Son, and holy Spirit, which from Everlasting to Everlasting, have only *one Will*, and *one Work* of heavenly Life, Light, and Love *in*, and *towards* the Creature.—And as true as this is, so true is it also, that from the first to the last Man, no one was, or ever will be any farther from this essential Operation of the holy Deity in his Soul, but so far as he hath withdrawn himself from it.—*God hardened the Heart of Pharaoh*; this saith neither more nor less, than that *Pharaoh* had withdrawn his Heart from God. When God saith to *Moses*, *I will harden his Heart, that he will not let the People go*; it hath no other Meaning, than to
give

give to *Moses* that same full Assurance of *Pharaoh's* State, which he gave to *Jeremiah* at another Time. *Thou shalt* (saith God) *speak all these Words to them*, (N. B.) *but they will not hearken to thee, thou shalt call unto them, but they will not answer thee.* Jer. vii. 27.—God helped *Pharaoh* to his *hardened Heart*, just as he helped *Adam* not to be *afraid* of eating of the evil Tree, by assuring him, that certain Death was hid in it.—But *Adam's* turning from God, to hear the Voice and Instruction of his own *Reason* and *Imagination*, and the Suggestions of a satanical Serpent, was that which created in him a new hardened Heart, bold enough to eat of the forbidden Tree.—Now here, Sir, I would have you observe, that this Rise of the first Sin, fully demonstrates how the Matter *unalterably* stands between God and every Sinner, to the end of the World; there cannot be the smallest Variation, either on the side of God, or on the side of the Sinner. The *whole Nature* of God, his one unalterable Will and Work, stands in the same full Opposition and Contrariety to every Work of Sin in every Man, as it did to *Adam's* first Transgression. Nothing new will ever be in any Sin, it has but one Way of coming into the World, it must always be born out of Self and Satan, as the first was.—And that which God did to prevent the first Sin, saying

saying to *Adam*, *Eat not*, that same miraculous Voice of Love, keeps saying, and saying to every Son of *Adam*, *Sin not*.

Yet so wise in the Ways of God, are some Divinity-Students, as to teach and preach, that the whole World, through its thousands of Years, has been bringing forth its millions of Myriads of Sinners all round the Globe, who as soon as they have done with the Vanity and Misery of this World, are to be roaring in the hottest Fire of an eternal Hell. For what? Why, because they have been just as wicked, as the Decrees of God required and forced them to be. And also through every Age of the World, there hath always been a *little* Number of Righteous, who were to go to Heaven, which Number had no Littleness in it, but because God would not suffer it to be greater.

Can a Charge like this be brought against Satan? Nay, doth it not even free Satan from all the Evil that is charged upon him, and make him, though going about as a roaring Lion, to be as insignificant a Tool in the Work of Sin, as the Preacher is in the Work of Godliness, though with ever so loud a Voice, he beseeches the *Reprobate* to be reconciled to God, or with Tears in his Eyes, exhorts the *Elect* not to depart from him?

You once, I remember, said to me, that you thought I over did the Matter, in my
Censure

Censure upon Learning.—Let Learning therefore speak for itself. Let its own Works praise it. What has it done? What has brought forth a *Multiplicity* of Churches, but that very same Acuteness of Learning, which asserts and proves there is but *One*? Whence comes Transubstantiation, Election, Reprobation, Justification of several Sorts, Necessity and Insignificancy of Works, Socinianism, Arianism, &c. but from that Knowledge of History, and critical Skill in Words, which is the Glory of the learned World.

Without me ye can do nothing, saith Christ. —That which a Man soweth, that shall he reap, saith the Apostle. Truths like these, of which the Scripture is full, would keep all Believers in the true Church, attentive to the one thing needful, had not a Learning falsely so called, filled all Eyes with the Dust of Darkness.

Now, Sir, be as sober as you will about the Use and Power of Learning, Logic, and Eloquence, in the Doctrines of Salvation; condemn the bad use that Heretics, Schismatics, Arians and Socinians have made of them; yet let me whisper this Truth into your Ear, that you will never be delivered from the Delusion and Cheat of your own Learning, till by a Light of Life risen up within you, you come to see, and know, that you want no more Learning, to change
you

you from a Sinner into a Saint, than *Mary Magdalene* did.

God said to *Abraham*, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*. This was the *Hebrew School*, in which the Father of the Faithful, was to learn to be perfect.—But here now comes the Scholar-Critic, and finds, that Matters stand not thus now, because the glorious Light of the Gospel (he says) has discovered that all lies in an *Election* and *Reprobation*, and that Salvation and Damnation come from nothing else, the Apostle expressly saying, *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy*.—What a learned Strife has there been about the Meaning of these Words? And yet they mean not one Jott more or less, than when the Apostle saith, *The natural Man knoweth not the Things of the Spirit, neither can he know them*.—All that is in the one Text, is in the other; and both of them say only this one great and good Truth, namely, that the Creature can have no divine Life, Light, Goodness, and Happiness, but from *That*, which the holy Tri-une God is, and operates by a Birth of his holy Nature in it.

Farewel,

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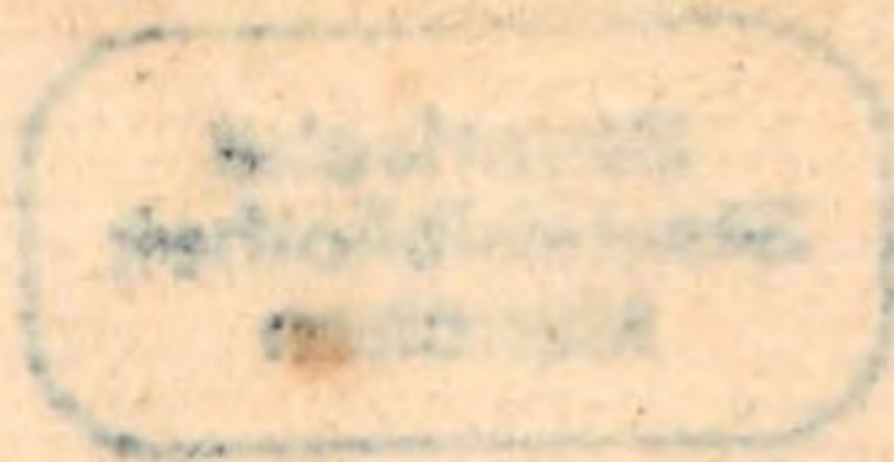
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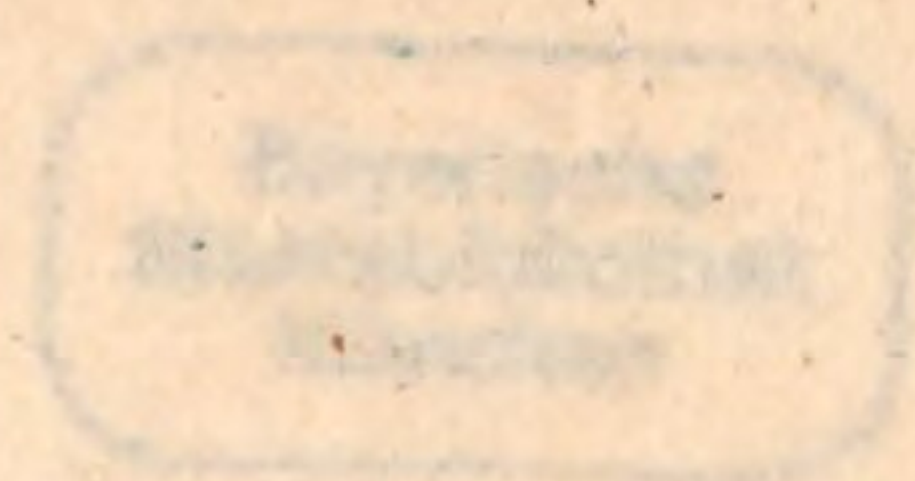
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